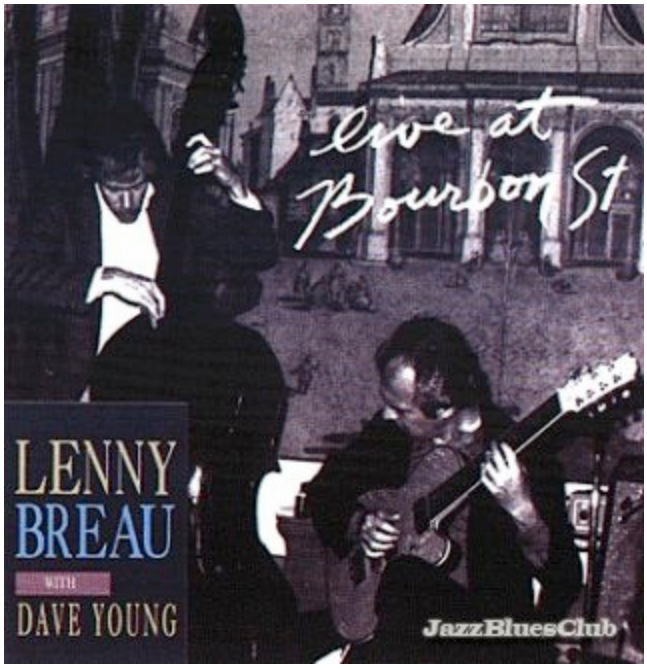
4 Jazz Blues Lenny Breau Chord Studies

When learning how to play jazz guitar, being able to comp with different chord voicings, chord qualities and in different keys is an invaluable skill that can raise the level of your playing and help you out of a lot of tricky situations.

In this lesson we're going to explore applying Lenny Breau chord voicings, in 4 positions, to a Jazz Blues Chord Progression in two different keys.

Learning how to play these fun and cool sounding chords will not only expand your vocabulary, bringing some of that Lenny Breau harmonic flavor to your comping and chord soloing, but it will also allow you to get that jazzy quality to your chords without having to play big, 5 and 6-note voicings.

So grab your axe, crank up your amp and let's dig in to these Lenny Breau Jazz Blues Chord Studies.



What Are Lenny Breau Chords?

Before we learn each of these 4 jazz guitar chord studies, let's get a clear idea of what I mean when I say Lenny Breau Chords on the guitar.

Lenny was one of the most versatile compers and chord soloists of his or any era, and a large part of this success and his unique sound was his ability to take small, two and three-note chords and make great sounding music from these easy to handle shapes.

The basis for these voicingss are two notes, the 3rd and the 7th of each chord in the underlying progression, and it's here that we'll focus our attention in today's lesson.

In trying to emulate the sound of piano chords on the guitar, Lenny decided that the best way to do this was to use 3rds and 7ths as the foundation for his guitar voicings, rather than the root a many other guitarists were doing at the time.

This gave him a unique sound, and it opened up a lot of harmonic space that he could then explore further when he added extensions on top of these easy to play two-note chords.

To emulate this in our own study, each of the chords in the following 4 chord studies has both the 3rd and 7th as well as one "color" tone added on top, either the 5th, 9th or 13th.

As you work through the different chords in the studies below, make sure to notice where the 3rd and 7th are for each chord that you are playing.

By recognizing these notes you will not only benefit from getting these studies under your fingers, but you will be able to take Lenny's approach to chords and apply it to other voicings, progressions and tunes that you are working on in the practice room.

Further Reading

Learn to Play Lenny Breau Chords for Jazz Guitar

Learn to Play 4th Chords Like Lenny Breau

Jazz Guitar Lick Video Lesson – Lenny Breau bII I Cadence

Guitar Practice Routine Day 9 – The Velvet Touch of Lenny Breau

Lenny Breau Blues Chords and Soloing – Audio Seminar

Lenny Breau Chord Study Practice Tips

There are a number of ways that you can approach these chord studies in the practice room in order to get them under your fingers and the sound of each chord in your ears.

Here are a few of my favorite ways to practice these chords in order to get the most out of your time spent on them in the woodshed.

You don't have to apply all of these ideas every day that you work on a chord study, which would be too daunting of a task.

What I like to do is print out lists like this, place it on my music stand, and then each day pick one idea to focus on as I work through the chord studies in my jazz guitar practice routine.

Here is the list:

- Memorize each chord study in the key given for each in the examples below
- Once memorized, practice each chord study at a variety of tempos
- Apply different jazz guitar rhythms such as the Charleston, Samba, Bossa Nova and others to each chord study
- Once you have each study under your fingers, practice moving between two or more positions in your comping and chord soloing
- Sing the root of each chord as you comp through each study on this page
- Practice bringing out the melody line of each study by playing the top note of every chord slightly louder than the bottom two, or play the top note first followed by the bottom two notes of each chord
- Practice bringing out the lower two notes for each chord by playing them louder or by playing them first, followed by the top note second, and quieter

- Practice sliding into each new chord change from a half-step above or a half-step below
- Fingerpick each chord found in the different chord studies
- Mix these chords into your solos in order to bring a new texture and timber to your jazz guitar improvisations

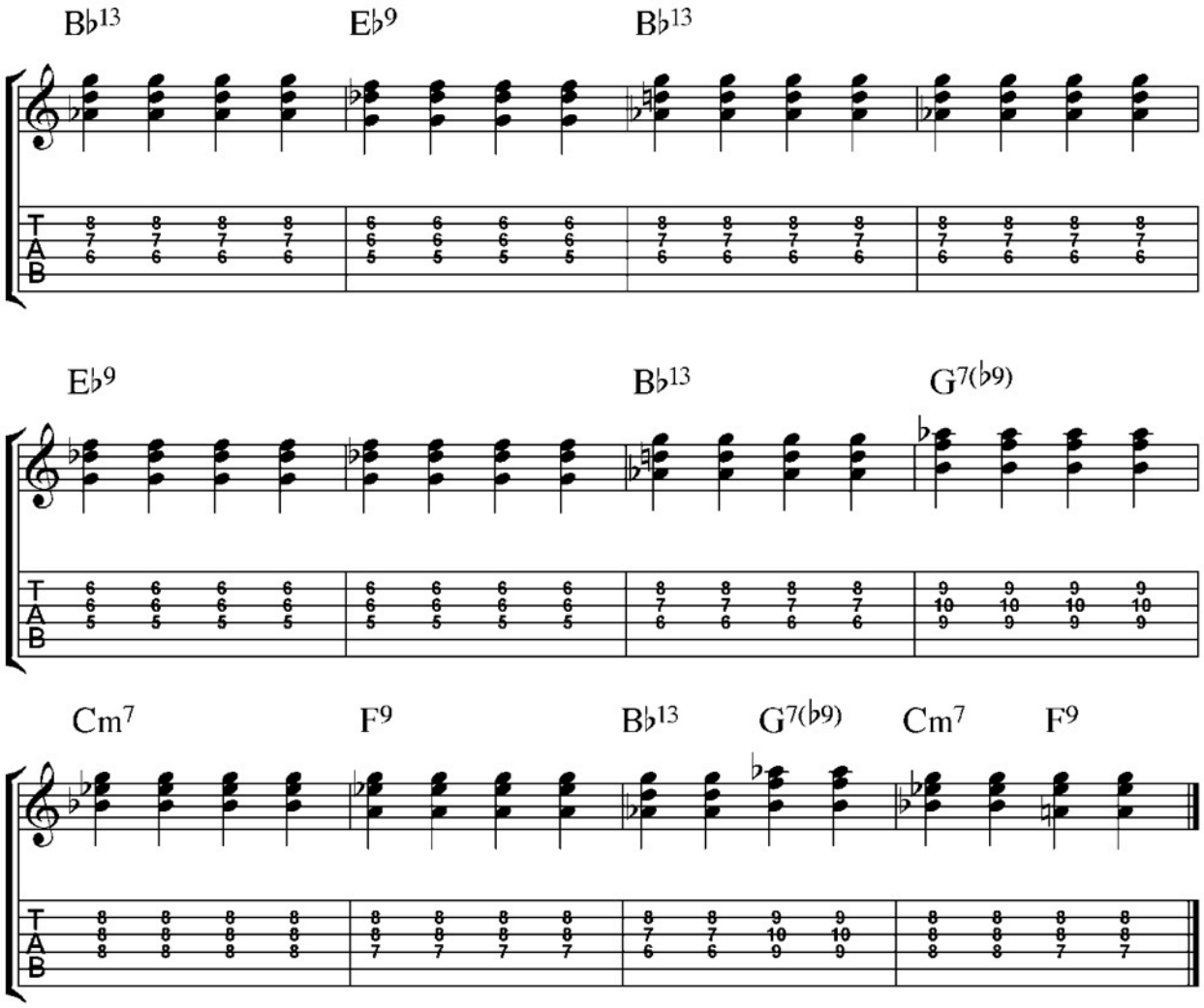
Study 1 – Bb Blues Shape 1

In this study, you'll be starting with the 7^{th}-3^{rd}-13^{th} on the Bb chord and then shifting to each chord in the progression, with as little movement as possible, from there.

As you move from one chord to the next, notice how the 3rds and 7ths stay as the lowest two notes of each voicing, but that they become inverted from one chord to the next, the 7^{th} and 3^{rd} of Bb move to the 3^{rd} and 7^{th} of Eb for example.

This is an important voice-leading movement as it allows you to move from one chord to the next without jumping around the neck as you do.

Click to hear the audio for this example.



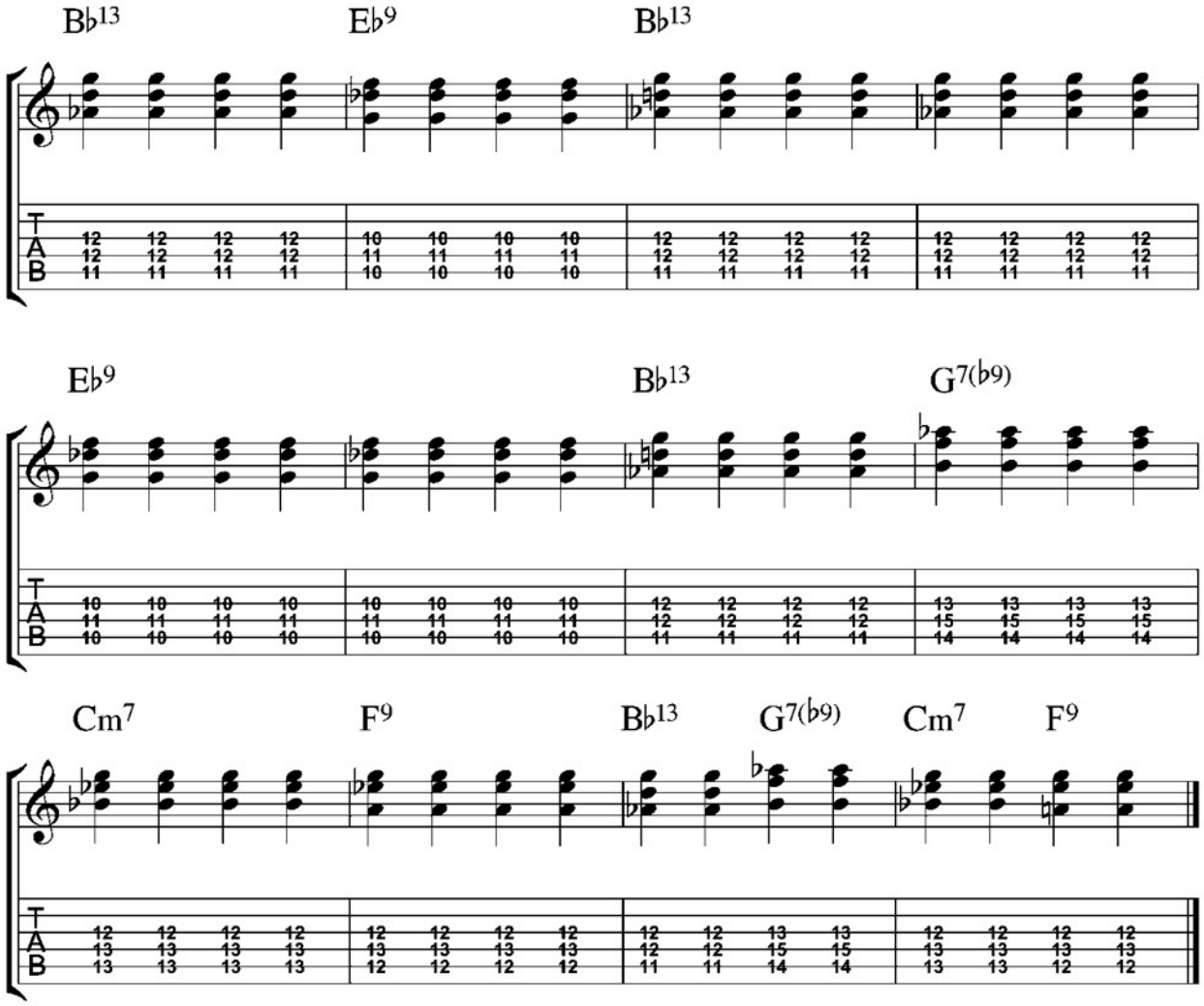
Study 2 – Bb Blues Shape 2

The next example uses the exact same notes as the previous one, but now we have moved over to the 5th-4th-3rd string set.

Lenny liked to apply these chords to the 5-3 and 4-2 string sets, and sometimes even to the 6-4 string group, but for many people the low strings sound too muddy when using these three-note chords.

So, start by working these ideas on these 2 string sets first, as this will open up your neck while getting these chords under your fingers at the same time.

Click to hear the audio for this example.



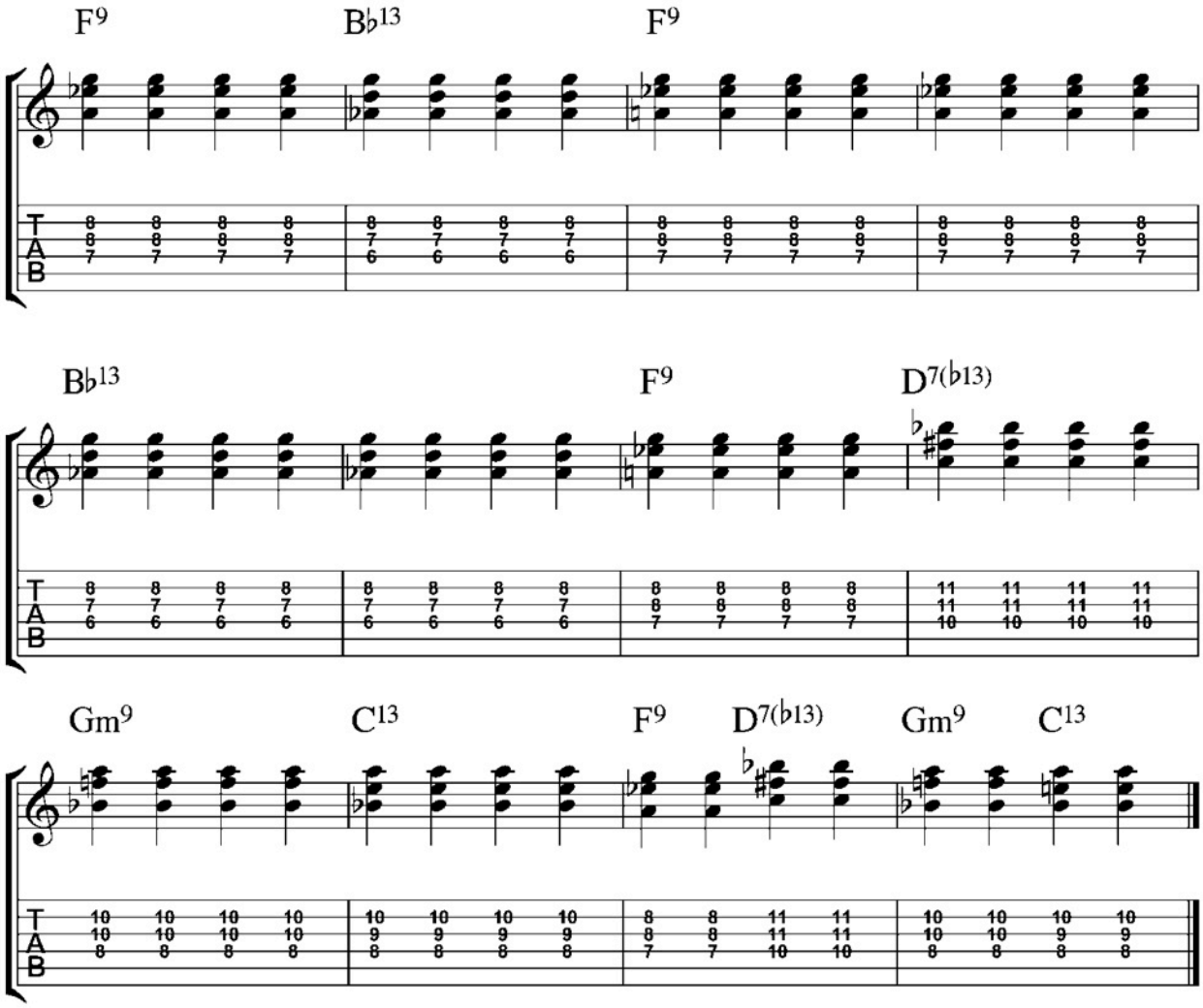
Study 3 – F Blues Shape 1

We'll now return to the 4-2 string group, but this time we'll move to the key of F and invert the lowest two notes of each chord, so now you start with 3rd and 7th on the F chord and move around each chord from there.

Notice that even though you are starting with the 3rd and 7th inverted, as compared to the first two chord studies, the voice leading movement is the same.

The 3rd and 7th of F become the 7th and 3rd of Bb and so on as you move throughout the progression in the same manner that you saw in the previous 2 examples, just inverted.

Click to hear the audio for this example.



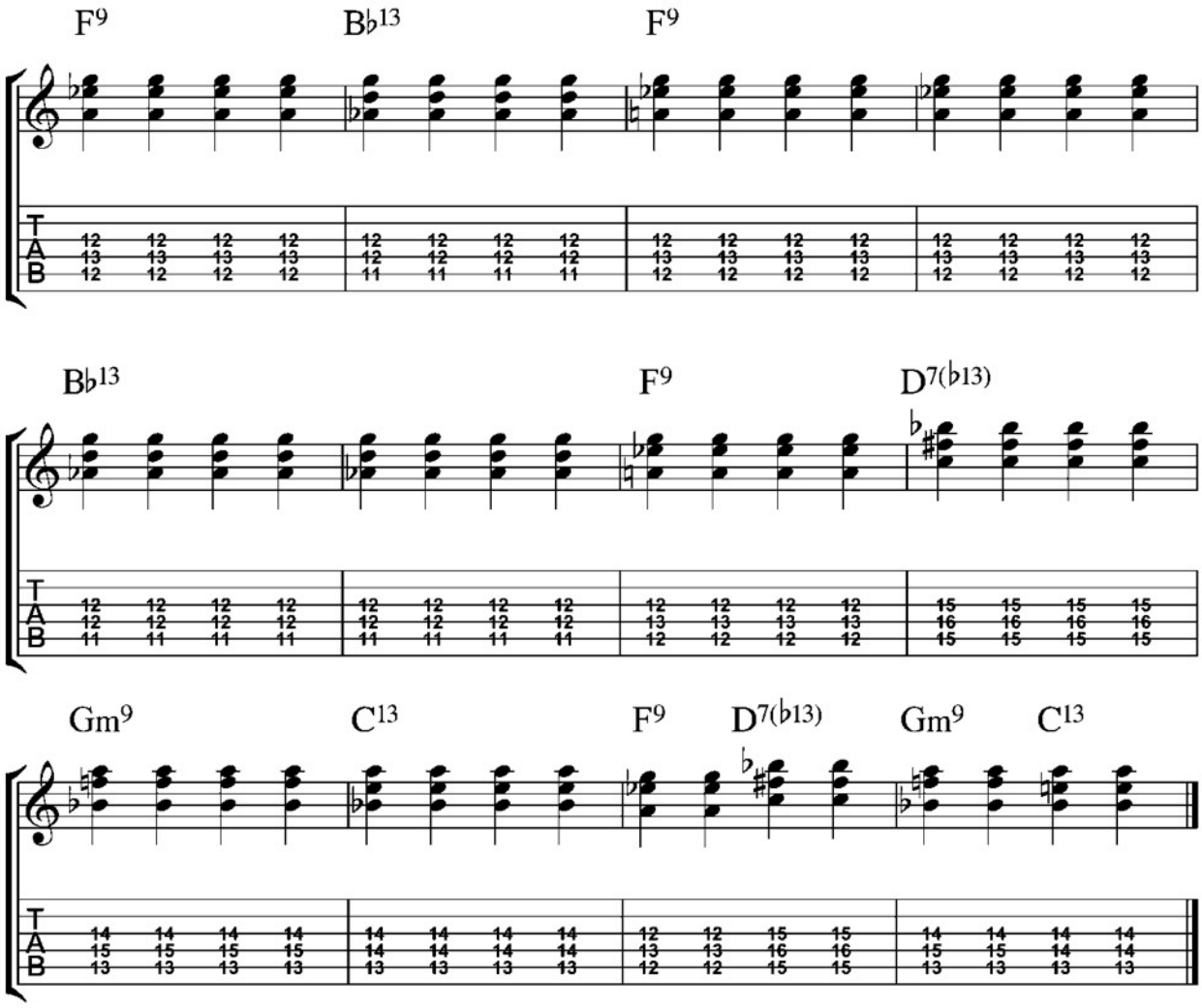
Study 4 – F Blues Shape 2

To finish up, we will take the same notes from the previous example and apply them to the 5-3 string group, following the same voice-leading principles that we have used for every example in this lesson.

At this point you should have a good grasp of these chords and how they function over an F and Bb blues progression.

So, try taking these chords to other keys of the blues as well as other tunes that you are working on in order to get the most out of these voicings in your practicing and playing.

Click to hear the audio for this example.



I hope you enjoyed today's lesson. I'm a big fan of Lenny's playing and his approach to playing chords on the guitar.

Though they may seem simple, as they only have 3 notes in each voicing, these chords can go a long way in bringing that authentic jazz sound to your comping and chord soloing, without having to learn big, bulky chords around the neck.

Did you enjoy this lesson, have a comment or a suggestion?

Visit the Matt Warnock Guitar Facebook Page and post your thoughts and/or questions on my wall and I'd be happy to discuss it with you.

Jazz-Blues Comping

"The master of this style of rhythm guitar was Freddie Green," said Breau. "He played in Count Basie's band for over 40 years."

BY LENNY BREAU

FOR THE MAJORITY of blues styles—including those combining elements of rock and folk music—the 12-bar structure has remained relatively simple: the I-IV-V progression, with melodies constructed from the five-note blues scale. However, in jazz, the blues is embellished with an almost limitless combination of melodic and harmonic devices.

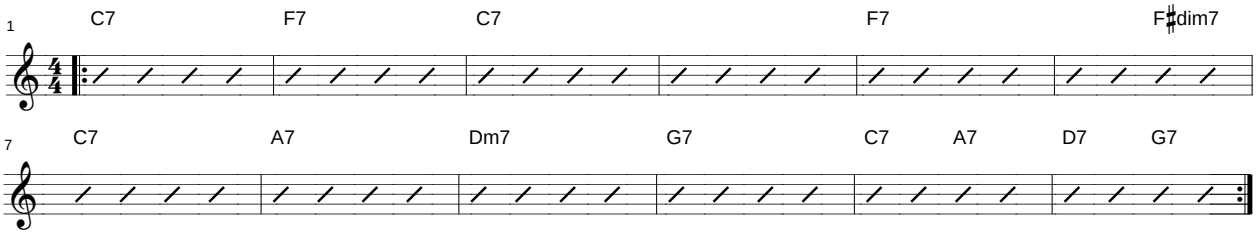
The most common 12-bar blues progression is four bars of I, two bars of IV, two bars of I, one bar of V, one bar of IV, and two bars of I. However, jazz players employ a harmonic framework similar to that of **Ex. 1**. Note the use of the VI chord (*A7*) in bar 8, and how from there the harmony back-cycles home to the I in bar 10. Bars 11 and 12—the turnaround measures—use a common I-VI-II-V progression, while the *F♯dim7* in bar 6 is a substitute that connects IV to I. Ex. 1 is just a skeleton; you can freely add substitute chords that include alterations and extensions, as long as you exercise good taste.

One of the best places to start learning jazz rhythm guitar is with four-to-the-bar comping. **Ex. 2** is a blues progression based on the chords in Ex. 1, only using a few substitutes. These voicings work especially well for straight rhythm, and they sound very full, even though they have only three notes. For this rhythm style, you'll get a better feel if you strum with a pick or your thumb (I use a thumbpick). Strum using downstrokes, and avoid sounding the strings not played. (They can be damped by strategic placement of your fretting hand; experiment until you're successful.) Once you've memorized Ex. 1 and can embellish it with some chords, transpose it to all keys.

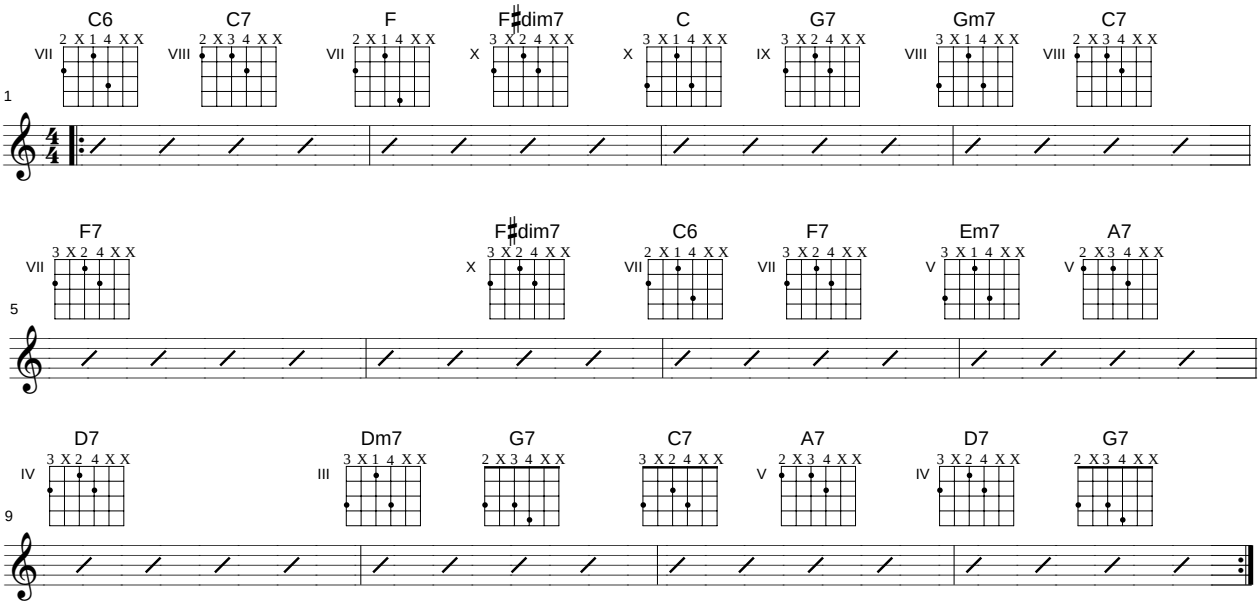
Originally published in the June '84 GP.

CHOPS BUILDER

Ex. 1



Ex. 2



"I always found the notion of solos comical, just ego-wanking."— Daniel Ash, Nov. '94, *GP*

U = DOUBLE STOP PLUCKING

HARP-HARMONIC TECHNIQUE - Page 1

(ALA CHET ATKINS, LENNY BREAU)

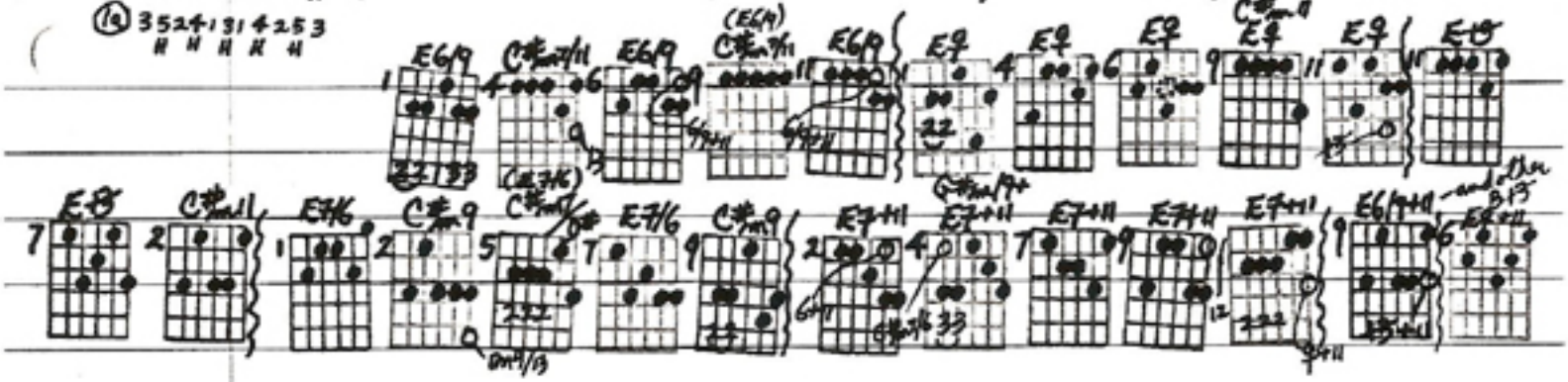
NAMES ARE GIVEN "1st CHOICE" PREFERENCE

BASIC PATTERNS FOR CHORDS ON TOP 5 STRINGS: (H = HARMONIC)

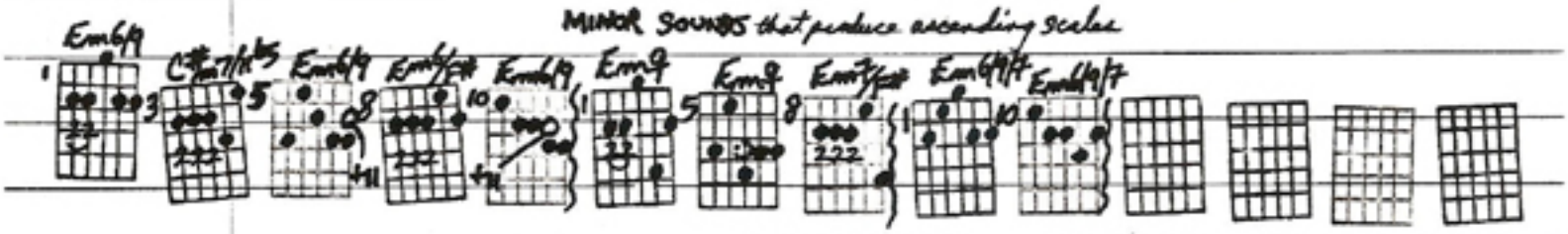
① (STRINGS) 5 2 4 1 3 1 4 2 5
H H H H H

①a 3 5 2 4 1 3 1 4 2 5 3
H H H H H

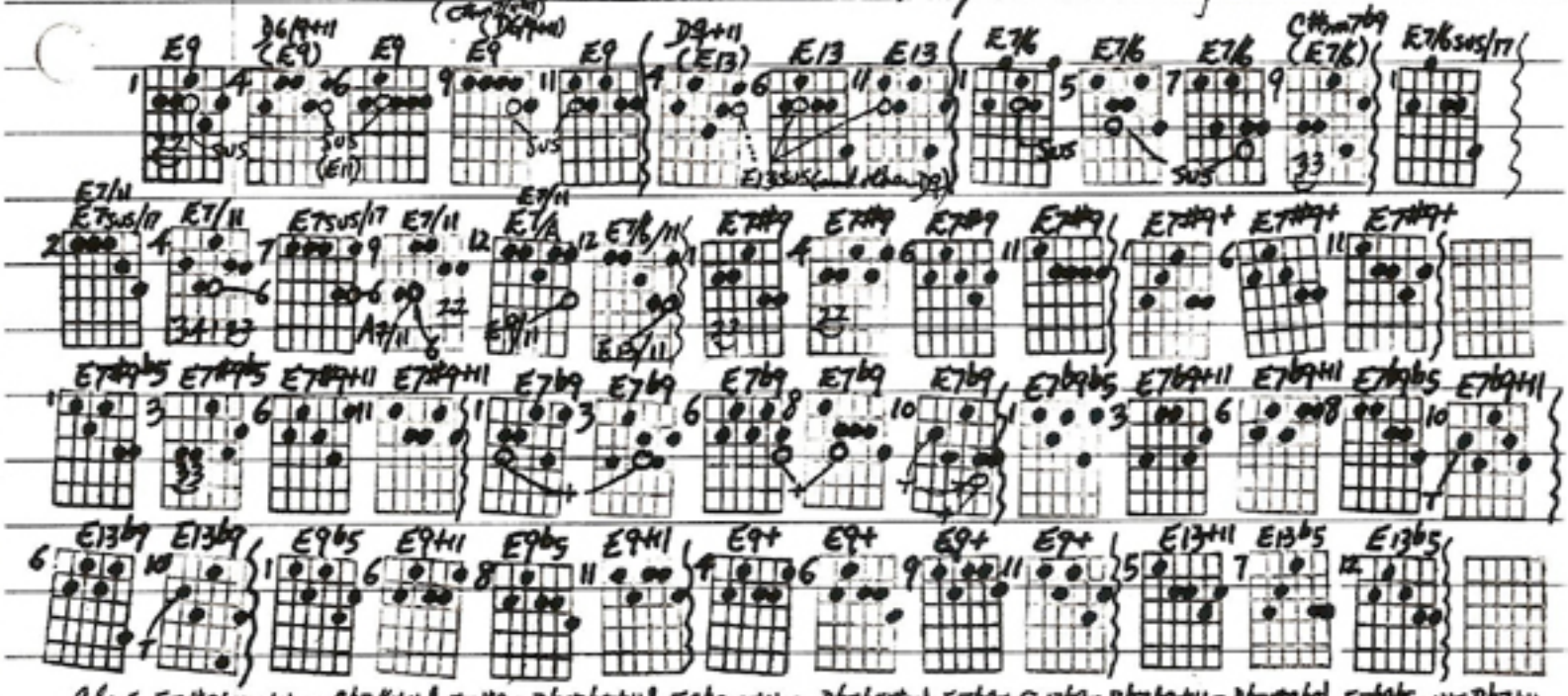
(mn7) MAJOR SOUNDS that produce ascending scales



MINOR SOUNDS that produce ascending scales



DOMINANT 7th SOUNDS that produce ascending scales



Also: E7#9b5sus+11 = Bb7/A+11 | E7#9 = Bb13b9+11 | E9b5sus+11 = Bb7b5#5 | E7b9 = G13b9 = Bb7b9+11 = Bb7#9b9 | E7b9b5sus+11 = Bb7+11

SOME OTHER PATTERNS:

② (3) 5 2 4 1 3 2 3 1 2 4 5 2 3 (5 4)
H H H H H H H H

③ (3) 5 2 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 5 2 3 5 3 (on 4)
H H H H H H H H

④ (3) 5 2 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 4 5 2 3 5 4 (on 2 & 5)
H H H H H H H H H

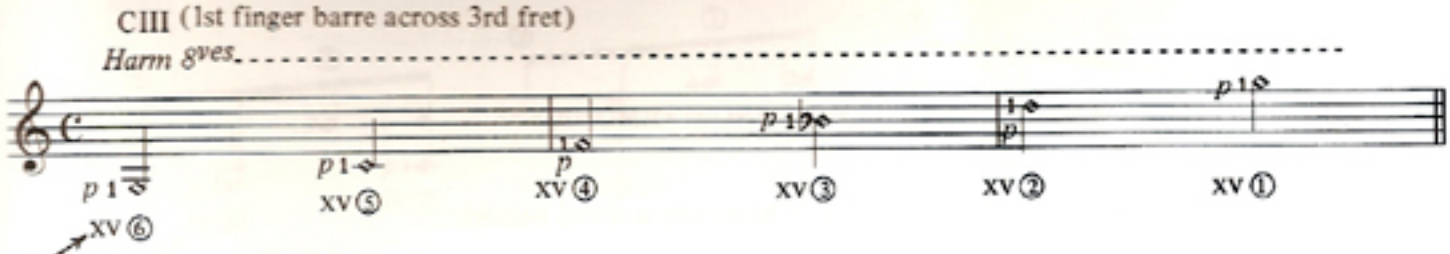
⑤ (3) 5 2 4 2 3 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 5 3 2
H H H H H H H H H

⑥ (3) 1 5 2 4 1 3 1 4 2 4 2 5 3 5 3 (on 4)
H H H H H H H H H

6 notes

To get "6 notes" ① Add a sensible bass to any of the above ② Transfer any chord to the lower set & add the soprano.

Traditionally, artificial harmonics are shown as regular fretted notes of normal pitch along with the abbreviation "H. 8," "Har. 8ve," or "Harm 8ve." This indicates that the notes are to be sounded as harmonics, one octave higher than written. Often the notes are diamond shaped. For example:



Use right hand harmonic technique at the 15th fret (see the Appendix, page 187).

Combining Harmonics with Regular (non-harmonic) Notes*

When a harmonic is rapidly alternated *in the same octave* with a note that is *not* a harmonic, the ear tends to perceive *all* the notes as harmonics. This technique creates an illusion of a shower of rapidly flowing, harp-like tones. The beautiful sounds that can be produced with this relatively new approach should provide you with many new areas for tonal exploration.

You can hear some astonishing examples of this effect in the recordings of three great finger style guitarists: Lenny Breau, Ted Greene and Chet Atkins.

Here is how the effect works:

Before you read and play the following material, review Right Hand Harmonic Technique (page 187).

Using right hand harmonic technique on open strings over the 12th fret:

1. Play **regular D** on open ④ with your *a* or *c*† finger.
2. Play **harmonic E** on open E, touch ⑥ over the **12th fret** with your *i* finger and sound the string with your thumb *p*.
   Note: although the notation for E on ⑥ is in a lower octave, the sound of the harmonic E is in the *same* octave as the low D on ④. This is what helps create the desired effect.
3. Play **regular G** on open ③ with *a* or *c*.
4. Play **harmonic A** on ⑤ with *p*.
5. Play **regular B** on ② with *a* or *c*.
6. Play **harmonic D** on ④ with *p*.
7. Play **regular E** on ① with *a* or *c*.
8. Play **harmonic G** on ③ with *p*.
9. Play **harmonic B** on ② with *p*.

* See photo 6 on page 185.
† I prefer the fourth or pinky finger *c* rather than *a* for combining regular notes with artificial harmonics. It is easier and faster to use and gets a better sound.

LENNY BREAU

FINGERSTYLE JAZZ

Arranging Bach's *Bouree In Em*

OVER THE LAST TWO lessons I've discussed various arranging techniques for fingerstyle—ways to make a chord-melody solo interesting. This month, let's take a look at how I turned Bach's *Bouree In Em* into a jazz waltz. This arrangement can be heard on the LP *Minors Aloud* [Flying Fish (3320 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60657), 088], which features myself and the great pedal steel player Buddy Emmons.

Classical guitar pieces represent a wealth of relatively untapped material for jazz players. In many cases, a composition's harmonic structure can be embellished with substitute chords, resulting in an intriguing blend of styles. (Hearing a familiar song played in a different way can be a pleasing and often amusing experience.) And keep in mind that modified classical numbers can make good chord-melody solos, as well as foundations for improvising.

On the recorded version of *Bouree*, I first played the classical part in its entirety (on electric guitar), and then went into a jazz waltz feel, adding bass and drums. Ex. 1 shows the first section of the tune as usually adapted for classical guitar. (Since I'm going to cover only the first part of the song, I suggest you get a copy of the entire piece, which can be found at practically any store with a good selection of sheet music.) Basically, to create my arrangement I modified three elements of the original work: the rhythm, the chord structure, and the melody.

The Bach version of the song is in cut time, which is 4/4 with an underlying feeling of two (the first and third beats are slightly accented). The first section is eight bars long (notice the repeat sign). When I came up with the 3/4 time feel, it turned out that each beat of the original version was equal to three beats of the waltz arrangement. In other words, four bars of 4/4 time ended up equalling 16 bars of 3/4 time. (Converting a 4/4 piece to 3/4 is essentially arrived at by several variables, including melodic and rhythmic structure.) Therefore, twice through Ex. 3 is equivalent to once through Ex. 1.

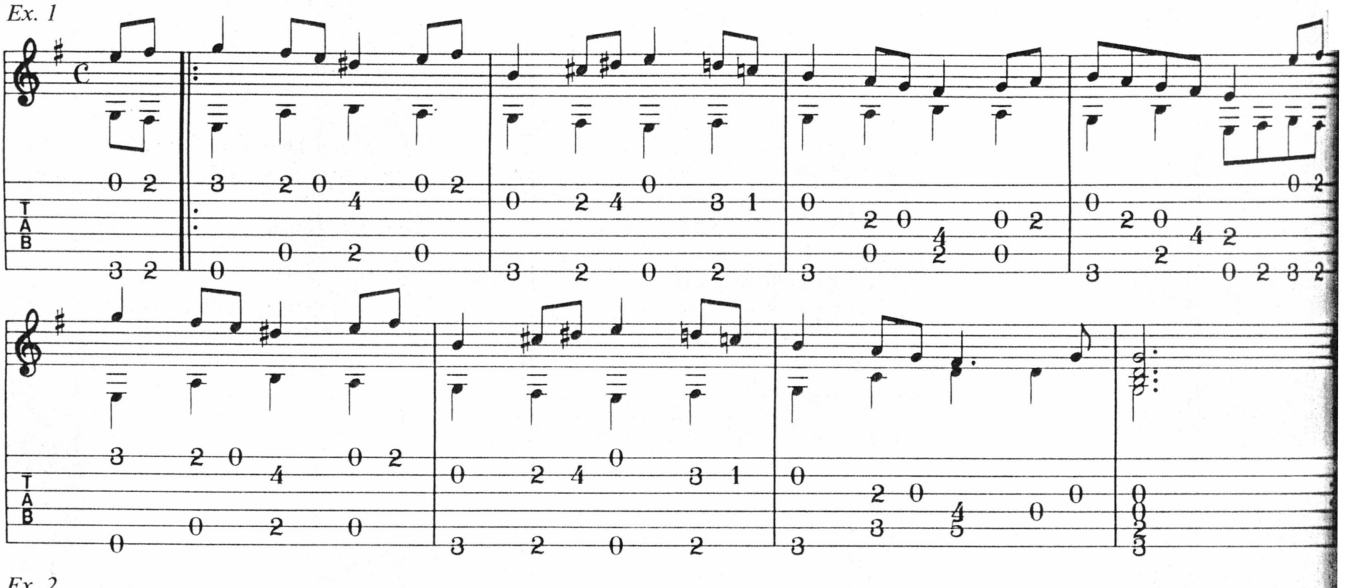
In order for you to see how I arrived at the substitute changes for the jazz arrangement, it's important to understand the basic underlying harmony of the classical guitar version. Ex. 2 represents the basic chord structure of the *Bouree*. (Keep in mind that a song's harmony usually can be interpreted in several ways.) At this point I recommend playing the basic chords to the song while singing the melody to get a better feel for the original.

One of the best approaches to take when examining chord progressions is to look for the major points of resolution and then backtrack through the changes. Ex. 2 resolves to *Em* in the last bar, so let's start at that point in Ex. 3 (the fourth bar from the end) and work backwards. Generally, look for two different kinds of movement from one chord to the next: chromatic (for instance, *Cmaj13* to *B7#9*) and fourths (such as *B7#9* to *Em*, VI).

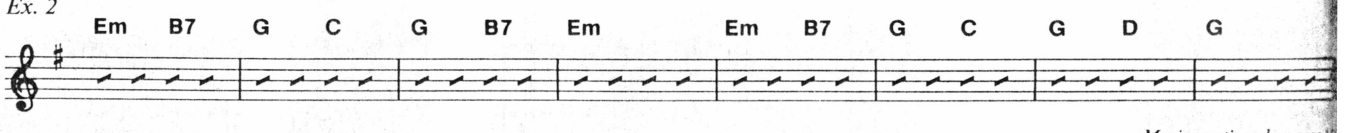
Since we already know that *B7* is the V of *Em*, let's now consider *Cmaj13* in bar 8 of Ex. 3 (we'll discuss the *F#m11* in a moment). *Cmaj13* resolves to *B7#9* chromatically. Since a II chord can precede a dominant (V), *F#m11* was used in bars 9 and 10 and is a common substitution. Backtracking further, *G7b9* is the V of *C6*, *D13* is the V of *Gmaj*, and *Am7b5* is the V of *D13* and creates a II-I in the key of *G*. Frequently a song features harmonies that can't be explained logically—they just sound good. The *Cmaj7#11* in bar 7 does lead nicely to *Am7b5*, but I really used it because it sounded right. To summarize, my alternate progression mainly uses chromatic movement, substitutes IIm chords for V7, and back cycles through the circle of fifths.

Now compare the chord sequence in Ex. 3 to Ex. 2. Note the harmonies common to both examples, as well as the differences. Although my alternate progression resolves smoothly to *Em*, certain parts of the original melody didn't work, so I changed it. Analyze Bach's melody and compare it to the chords in Ex. 3, as well as their related scales. By the way, instead of using a *B7*-type chord to lead back into bar 1, I followed the final *Em* with an *A13* (*Em* and *A7* are a II V in the key of *D*). This makes a nice turnaround and surprises the listener, because it doesn't resolve the way you'd expect.

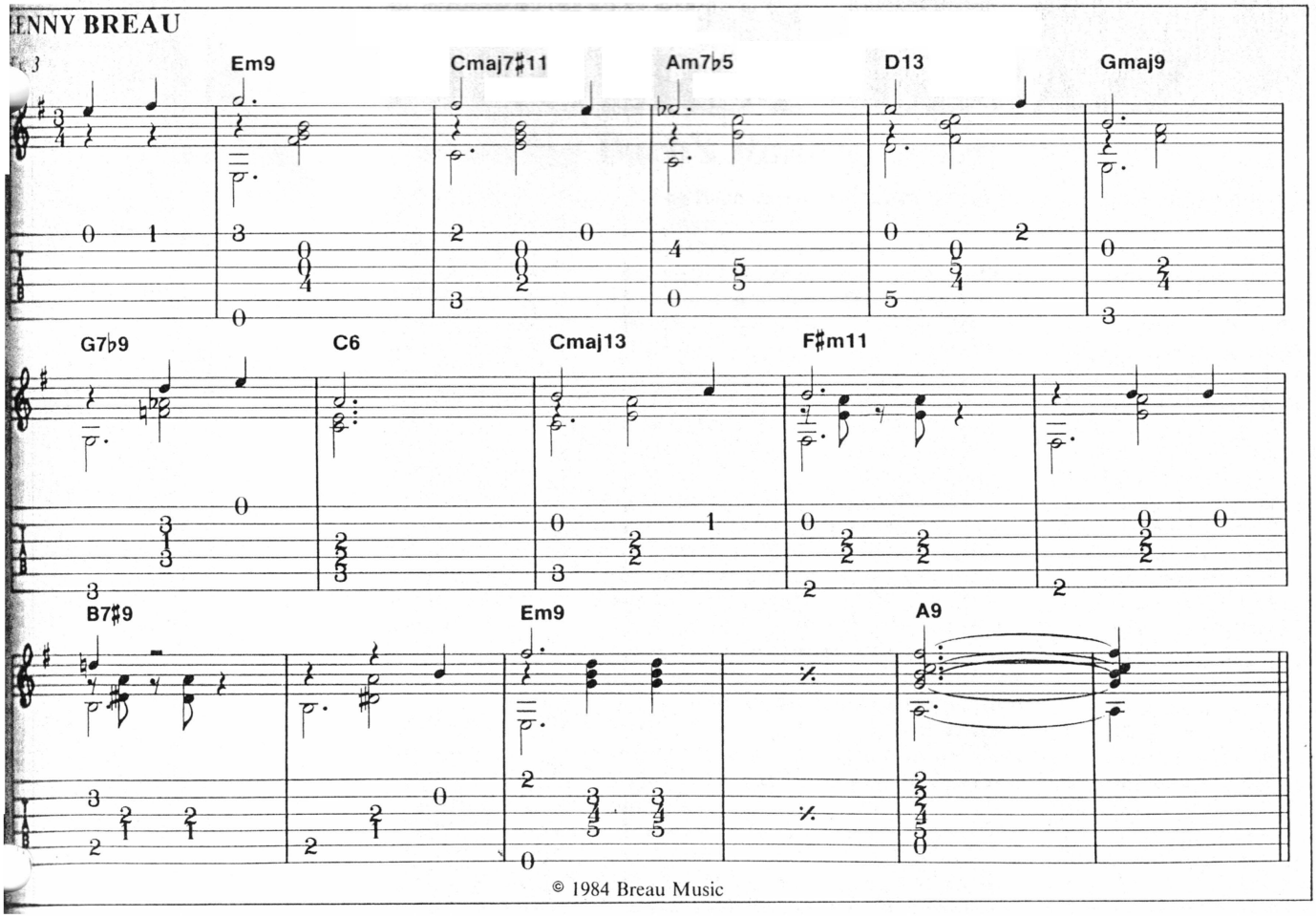
Ex. 1



Ex. 2



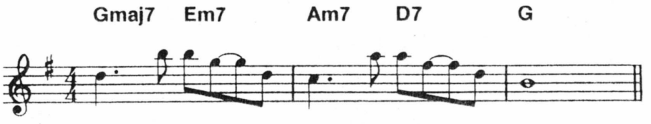
Music continued on page 13


LENNY BREAU
Em9
Cmaj7♯11
Am7♭5
D13
Gmaj9
G7♭9
C6
Cmaj13
F♯m11
B7♯9
Em9
A9
© 1984 Breau Music

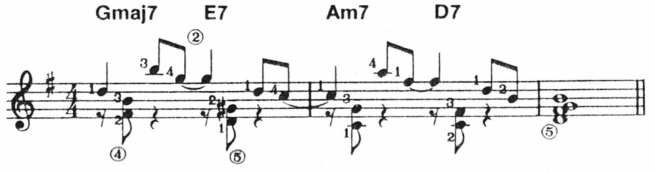
LENNY BREAU
FINGERSTYLE JAZZ
Arranging Devices For Chord-Melody Solos

PRODUCING A NICE SOLO arrangement of a tune is one of the most satisfying aspects of being a jazz-oriented player. But putting a piece together can be frustrating, too; especially if you want to do something different for a change, but new ideas just won't come. Last month we explored four-to-the-bar playing and the 3/4 time approach. Let's devote this month's lesson to several additional devices.

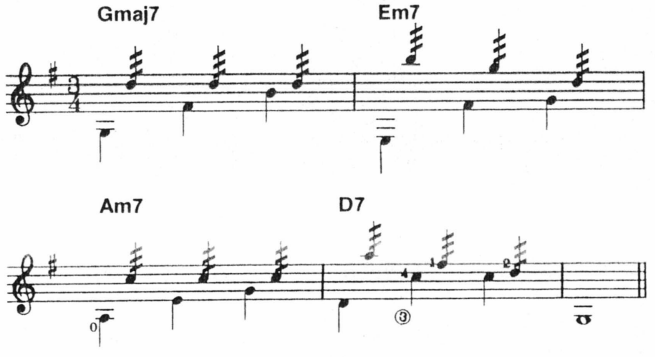
To refresh your memory, here's the melodic fragment we worked with last month. Remember not to proceed until you have it down pat:



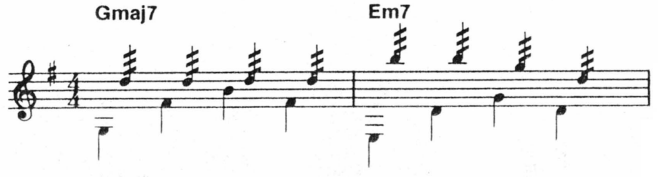
Two-note comping chords (the subject of my February, March, and April '82 columns) can really add swing to a piece. And while this method isn't really full-sounding enough to play a whole tune with, it really works great when used sparingly. Remember, when played correctly, the following example should sound like two guitars playing at once (the circled numbers indicate the strings, while the numbers without circles designate left-hand fingering):

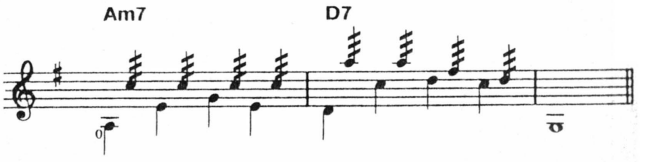


In the April and May '83 issues I discussed the tremolo. If you're familiar with my albums, then you probably know that I frequently use this technique. This example is a 3/4-time adaptation of the preceding melody:

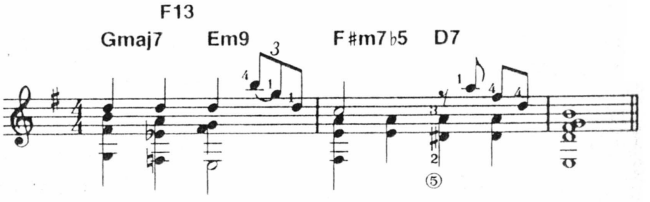


Here's the tremolo featured in a 4/4-time treatment of our little melody. Compare this example to the last one and see how I changed the note values to conform to the time signatures:

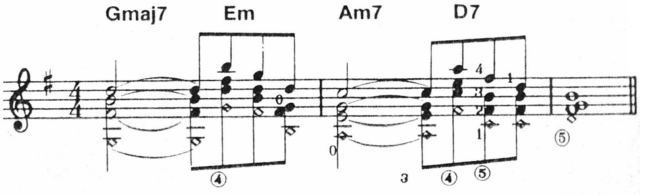




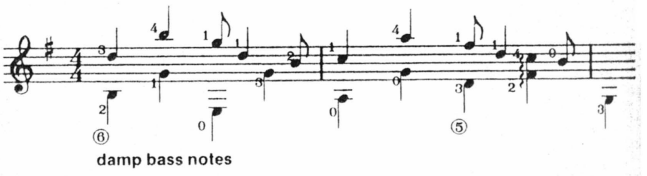
Just as you can take a tune in 4/4 and change it to 3/4, you can take a number that's commonly associated with a swing feel and give it a ballad treatment. Of course, the slower you play a song, the more you have a tendency to want to fill the empty space with sound. Using substitute chords is a good solution to the vacuum created by taking a song at ballad tempo. In the next illustration, the *F13* chord resolves to the *Em7*. Rather than have the phrase resolve to *Gmaj7* in the fourth bar, it progresses to the relative minor, *Em7*. The *F*#m7♭5 and the *B7* can now be substituted as the II V of *Em7*. Be sure to let each harmony ring for its full time value:



Octave harmonics are another good way to embellish a line (for more on this style, see my October '81 column):



And for all of you fans of Chet Atkins, here's an example of the way he might arrange a melody. Notice the alternating bass:

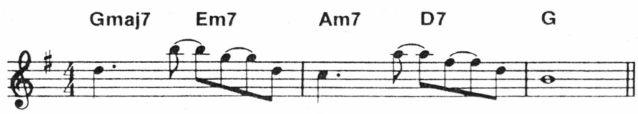


Finally, most good arrangements have a tasteful intro and ending, so for a few ideas along those lines, see my July '81 column. And remember that you can use more than one device in a piece. By playing numbers that use changes in time signature, various techniques, and assorted tempos and rhythmic feels, you'll be giving the listener a treat as well as making things interesting for you.

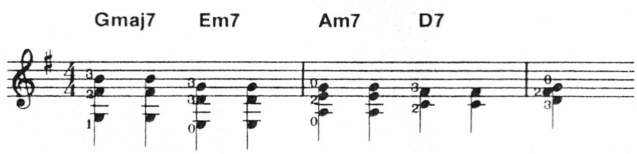
LENNY BREAU
FINGERSTYLE JAZZ
Chord-Melody Arranging Tips

MOST JAZZ PLAYERS HAVE no problem working up a basic chord-melody arrangement—harmonizing arrangement—harmonizing the melody, adding a few moving bass lines and single-note fills, and even revamping the chord changes somewhat. But things can begin to get tricky when all of your arrangements start to sound the same and you want to find a different approach. How do you get new ideas? What are some of the various angles you can take? For the next couple of sessions let's look at some of the options you should have at your disposal in order to develop interesting solo arrangements.

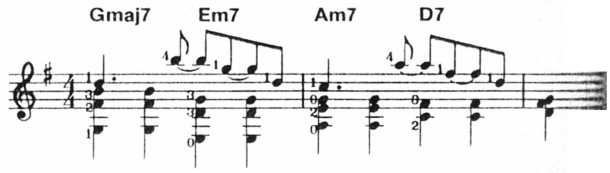
First we need a melody to work with. The following two-bar fragment fits a I VI II V progression, and is sequential in nature (note how the first phrase is repeated one *diatonic* step lower in the second measure):



Once you have the preceding melody down pat, you can go on. Our first approach uses a steady four-to-the-bar rhythm. (Listening to pianist Errol Garner was where I got the idea for this kind of a method). Start by playing the chords only:



Now you're ready to combine the harmony with the melody. Be prepared to spend some time on this; it's not as easy as it seems. Try to emphasize the upper note when the chord and melody are played at the same time, as in the first beat of each measure. And be sure the upper line is held for its full time value. With practice, this example should sound like two distinct parts played at once, and really swing:



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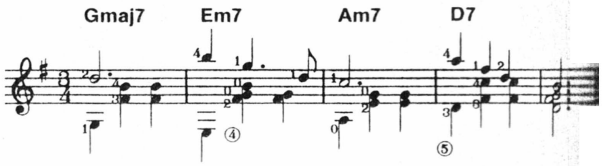

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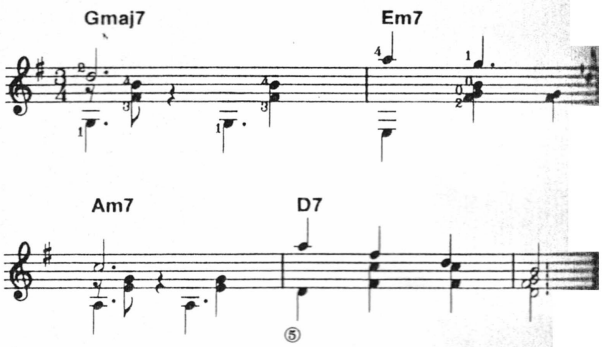


Remember that you don't have to play an arrangement the s all the way through—various techniques can be combined to crea piece that evolves and surprises the listener. Next month we'll loo tremolo, ballad, and harmonic approaches.

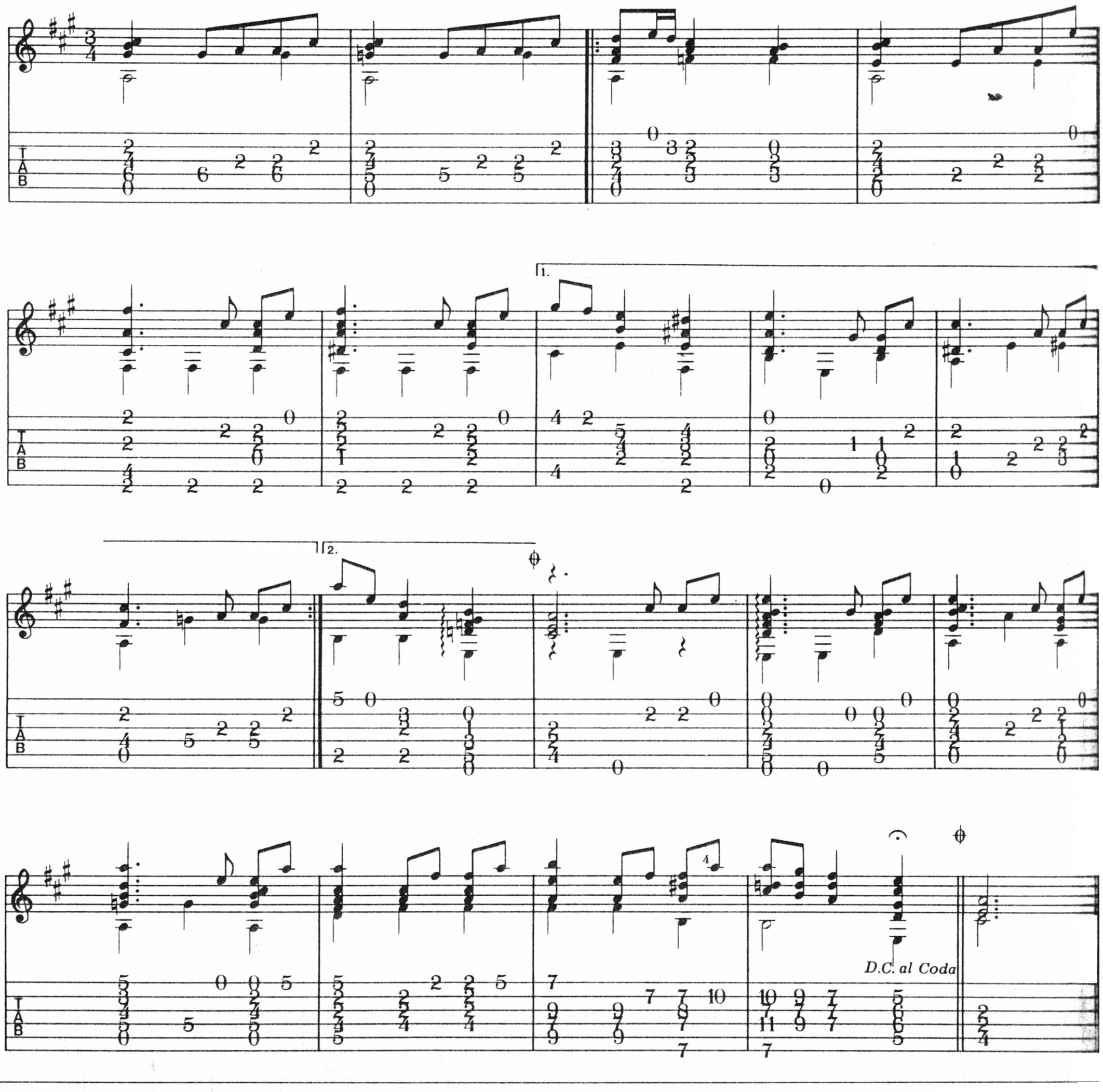
LENNY BREAU
FINGERSTYLE JAZZ
Updating A Classical Waltz

MANY CLASSICAL PIECES CAN BE GIVEN a refreshing twist merely by substituting jazz-type extended and altered chords for the original major, minor, and dominant harmonies. And the nice thing about taking a simplified approach to arranging is that you don't have to be a musical genius to do it. The following waltz by Frederic Chopin (1810-1849) almost automatically sounds good just by exchanging a few harmonies. However, once you begin to detail the arrangement with devices such as moving lines, it really begins to come to life.

In bar 1, an *Amaj9* is substituted for the original *A* triad. Look for this elementary kind of exchange in several measures, including 4, 13, 14,15, and the last beat of bar 11.

Once the chords were updated, I began to add a few moving lines. For instance, the progression in bars 1, 2, and 3 is the common I I7 IV IVm sequence. Now note the moving line *G# G F# F* starting in bar 1. Other moving voices can be found in bars 5 and 6, and bars 9 and 10.

After you've analyzed this piece and can play it, start looking for new material to arrange. (There are several large available collections of classical numbers that will give you a wide range of selections to choose from.) And keep in mind that this simple process works great for jazz standards, too.



LENNY BREAU

FINGERSTYLE JAZZ

Arranging Bach's *Bouree In Em*

OVER THE LAST TWO lessons I've discussed various arranging techniques for fingerstyle—ways to make a chord-melody solo interesting. This month, let's take a look at how I turned Bach's *Bouree In Em* into a jazz waltz. This arrangement can be heard on the LP *Minors Aloud* [Flying Fish (3320 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60657), 088], which features myself and the great pedal steel player Buddy Emmons.

Classical guitar pieces represent a wealth of relatively untapped material for jazz players. In many cases, a composition's harmonic structure can be embellished with substitute chords, resulting in an intriguing blend of styles. (Hearing a familiar song played in a different way can be a pleasing and often amusing experience.) And keep in mind that modified classical numbers can make good chord-melody solos, as well as foundations for improvising.

On the recorded version of *Bouree*, I first played the classical part in its entirety (on electric guitar), and then went into a jazz waltz feel, adding bass and drums. Ex. 1 shows the first section of the tune as usually adapted for classical guitar. (Since I'm going to cover only the first part of the song, I suggest you get a copy of the entire piece, which can be found at practically any store with a good selection of sheet music.) Basically, to create my arrangement I modified three elements of the original work: the rhythm, the chord structure, and the melody.

The Bach version of the song is in cut time, which is 4/4 with an underlying feeling of two (the first and third beats are slightly accented). The first section is eight bars long (notice the repeat sign). When I came up with the 3/4 time feel, it turned out that each beat of the original version was equal to three beats of the waltz arrangement. In other words, four bars of 4/4 time ended up equalling 16 bars of 3/4 time. (Converting a 4/4 piece to 3/4 is essentially arrived at by several variables, including melodic and rhythmic structure.) Therefore, twice through Ex. 3 is equivalent to once through Ex. 1.

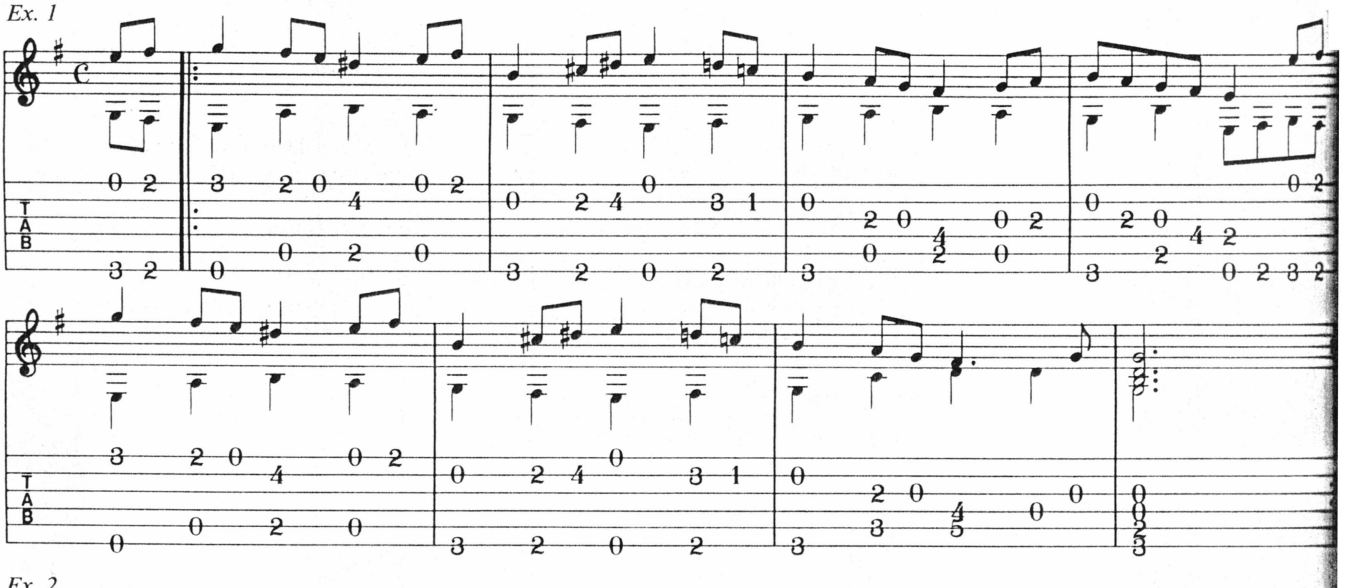
In order for you to see how I arrived at the substitute changes for the jazz arrangement, it's important to understand the basic underlying harmony of the classical guitar version. Ex. 2 represents the basic chord structure of the *Bouree*. (Keep in mind that a song's harmony usually can be interpreted in several ways.) At this point I recommend playing the basic chords to the song while singing the melody to get a better feel for the original.

One of the best approaches to take when examining chord progressions is to look for the major points of resolution and then backtrack through the changes. Ex. 2 resolves to *Em* in the last bar, so let's start at that point in Ex. 3 (the fourth bar from the end) and work backwards. Generally, look for two different kinds of movement from one chord to the next: chromatic (for instance, *Cmaj13* to *B7#9*) and fourths (such as *B7#9* to *Em*, VI).

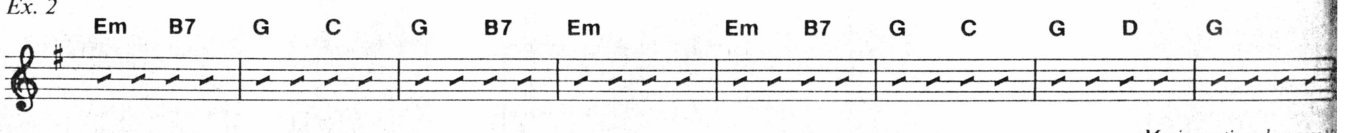
Since we already know that *B7* is the V of *Em*, let's now consider *Cmaj13* in bar 8 of Ex. 3 (we'll discuss the *F#m11* in a moment). *Cmaj13* resolves to *B7#9* chromatically. Since a II chord can precede a dominant (V), *F#m11* was used in bars 9 and 10 and is a common substitution. Backtracking further, *G7b9* is the V of *C6*, *D13* is the V of *Gmaj*, and *Am7b5* is the V of *D13* and creates a II-I in the key of *G*. Frequently a song features harmonies that can't be explained logically—they just sound good. The *Cmaj7#11* in bar 7 does lead nicely to *Am7b5*, but I really used it because it sounded right. To summarize, my alternate progression mainly uses chromatic movement, substitutes IIm chords for V7, and back cycles through the circle of fifths.

Now compare the chord sequence in Ex. 3 to Ex. 2. Note the harmonies common to both examples, as well as the differences. Although my alternate progression resolves smoothly to *Em*, certain parts of the original melody didn't work, so I changed it. Analyze Bach's melody and compare it to the chords in Ex. 3, as well as their related scales. By the way, instead of using a *B7*-type chord to lead back into bar 1, I followed the final *Em* with an *A13* (*Em* and *A7* are a II V in the key of *D*). This makes a nice turnaround and surprises the listener, because it doesn't resolve the way you'd expect.

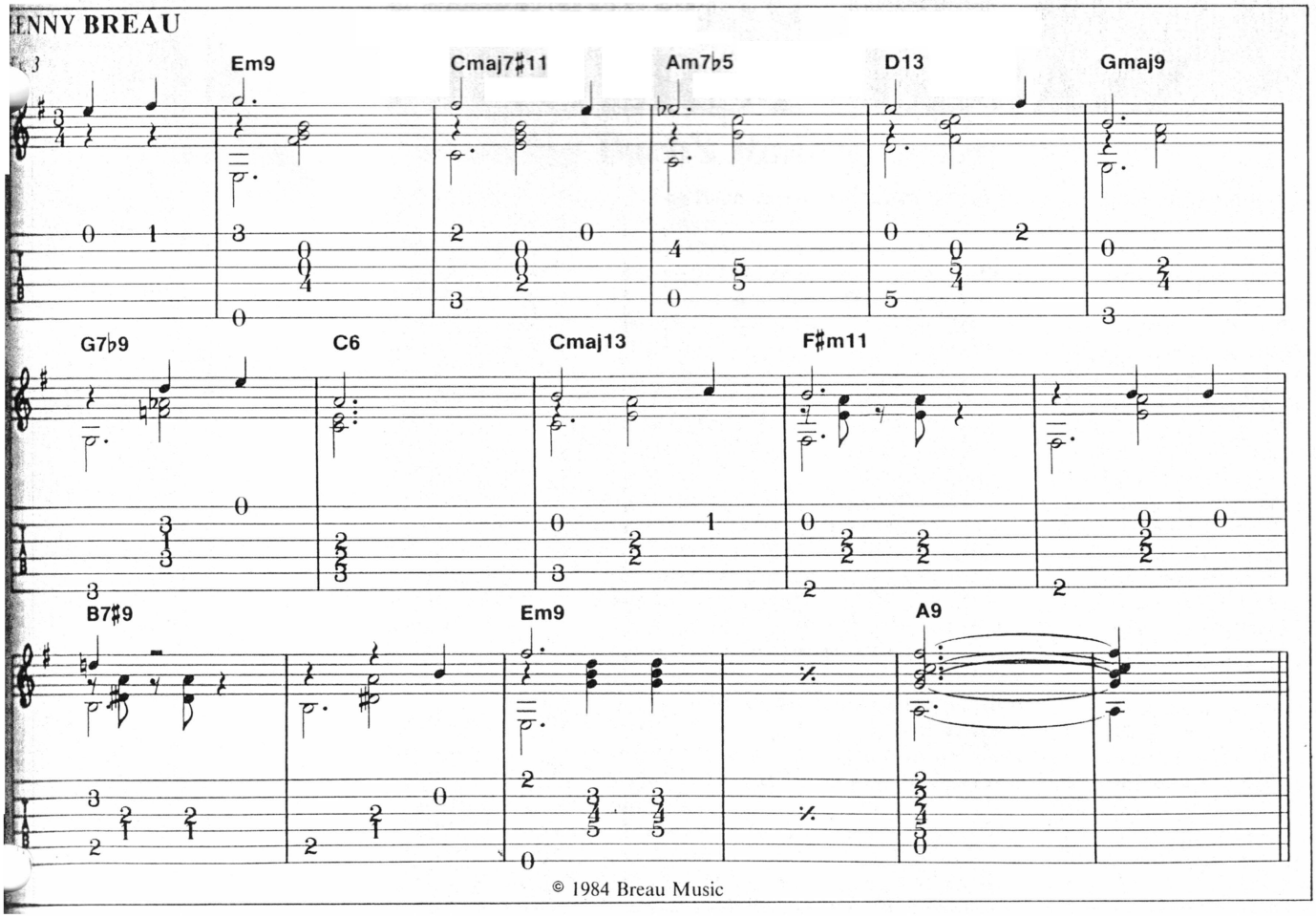
Ex. 1



Ex. 2



Music continued on page 13


LENNY BREAU
Em9
Cmaj7♯11
Am7♭5
D13
Gmaj9
G7♭9
C6
Cmaj13
F♯m11
B7♯9
Em9
A9
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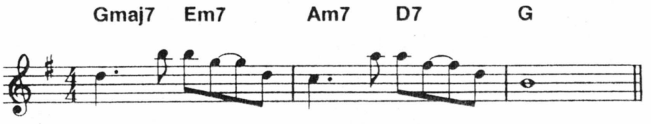
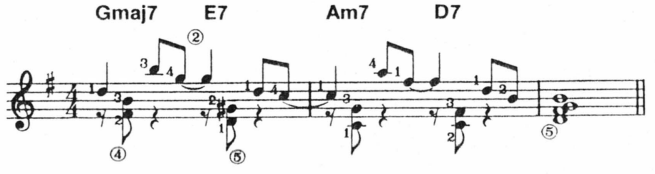
LENNY BREAU
FINGERSTYLE JAZZ
Arranging Devices For Chord-Melody Solos

PRODUCING A NICE SOLO arrangement of a tune is one of the most satisfying aspects of being a jazz-oriented player. But putting a piece together can be frustrating, too; especially if you want to do something different for a change, but new ideas just won't come. Last month we explored four-to-the-bar playing and the 3/4 time approach. Let's devote this month's lesson to several additional devices.

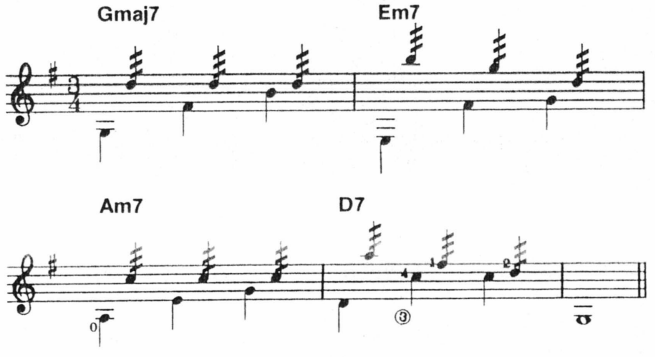
To refresh your memory, here's the melodic fragment we worked with last month. Remember not to proceed until you have it down pat:



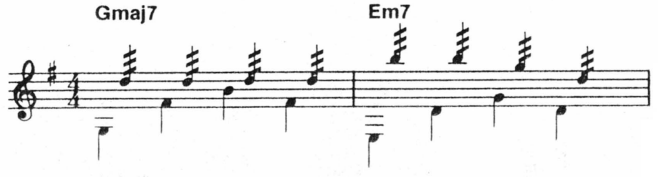
Two-note comping chords (the subject of my February, March, and April '82 columns) can really add swing to a piece. And while this method isn't really full-sounding enough to play a whole tune with, it really works great when used sparingly. Remember, when played correctly, the following example should sound like two guitars playing at once (the circled numbers indicate the strings, while the numbers without circles designate left-hand fingering):

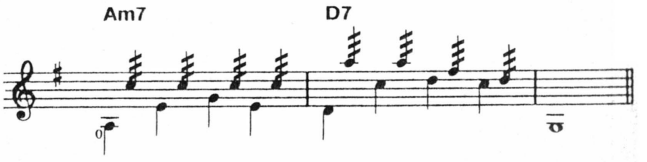


In the April and May '83 issues I discussed the tremolo. If you're familiar with my albums, then you probably know that I frequently use this technique. This example is a 3/4-time adaptation of the preceding melody:

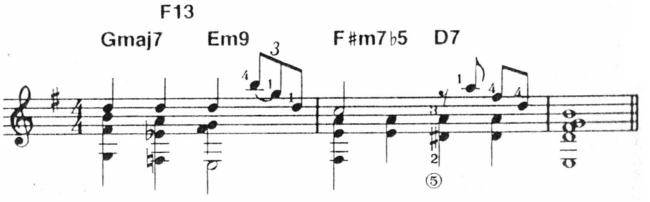


Here's the tremolo featured in a 4/4-time treatment of our little melody. Compare this example to the last one and see how I changed the note values to conform to the time signatures:

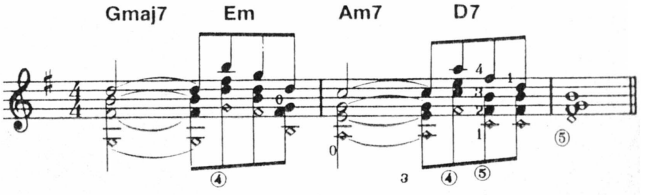




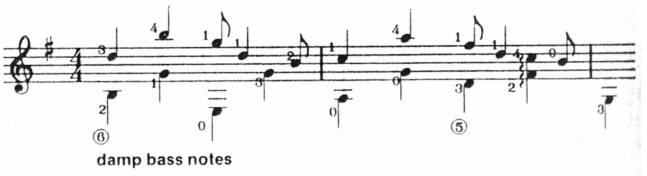
Just as you can take a tune in 4/4 and change it to 3/4, you can take a number that's commonly associated with a swing feel and give it a ballad treatment. Of course, the slower you play a song, the more you have a tendency to want to fill the empty space with sound. Using substitute chords is a good solution to the vacuum created by taking a song at ballad tempo. In the next illustration, the *F13* chord resolves to the *Em7*. Rather than have the phrase resolve to *Gmaj7* in the fourth bar, it progresses to the relative minor, *Em7*. The *F*#m7♭5 and the *B7* can now be substituted as the II V of *Em7*. Be sure to let each harmony ring for its full time value:



Octave harmonics are another good way to embellish a line (for more on this style, see my October '81 column):



And for all of you fans of Chet Atkins, here's an example of the way he might arrange a melody. Notice the alternating bass:



Finally, most good arrangements have a tasteful intro and ending, so for a few ideas along those lines, see my July '81 column. And remember that you can use more than one device in a piece. By playing numbers that use changes in time signature, various techniques, and assorted tempos and rhythmic feels, you'll be giving the listener a treat as well as making things interesting for you.

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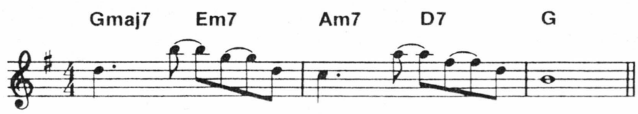

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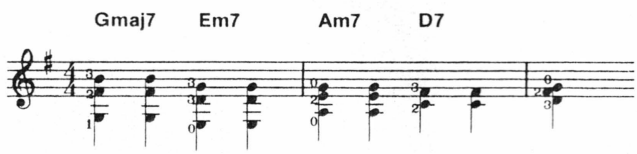

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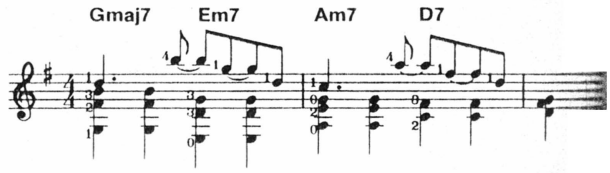

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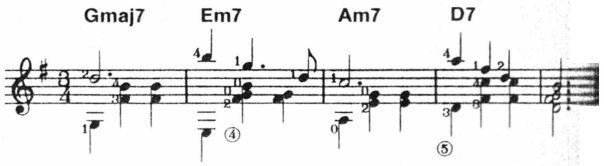

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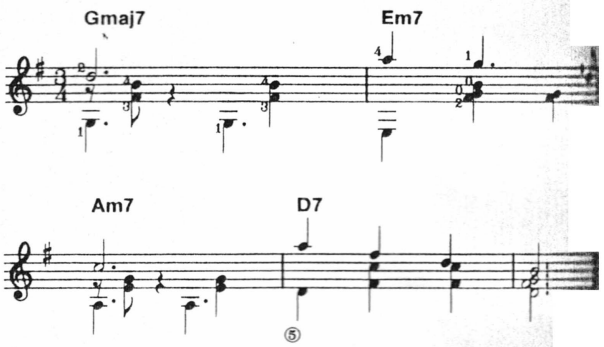

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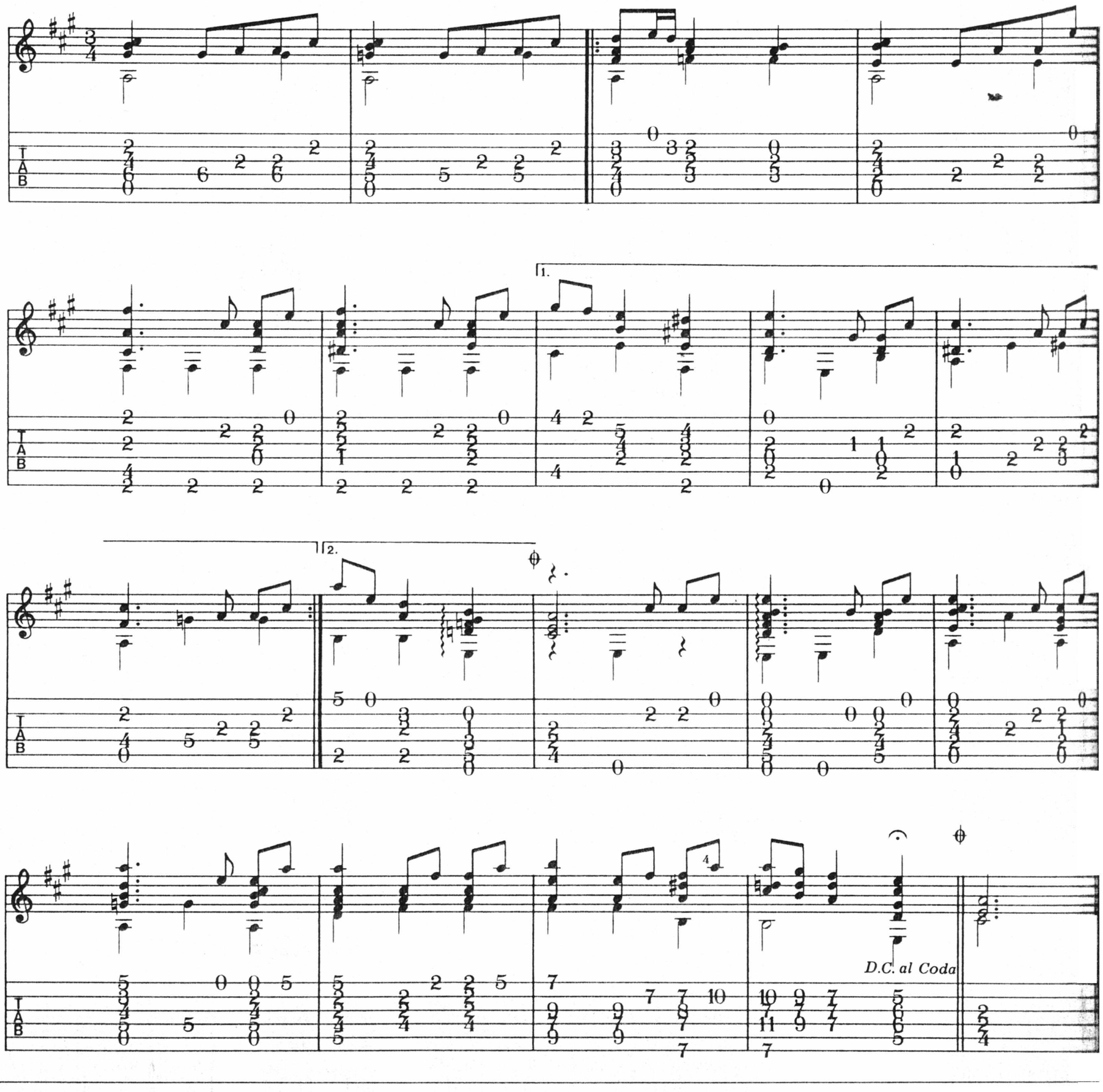
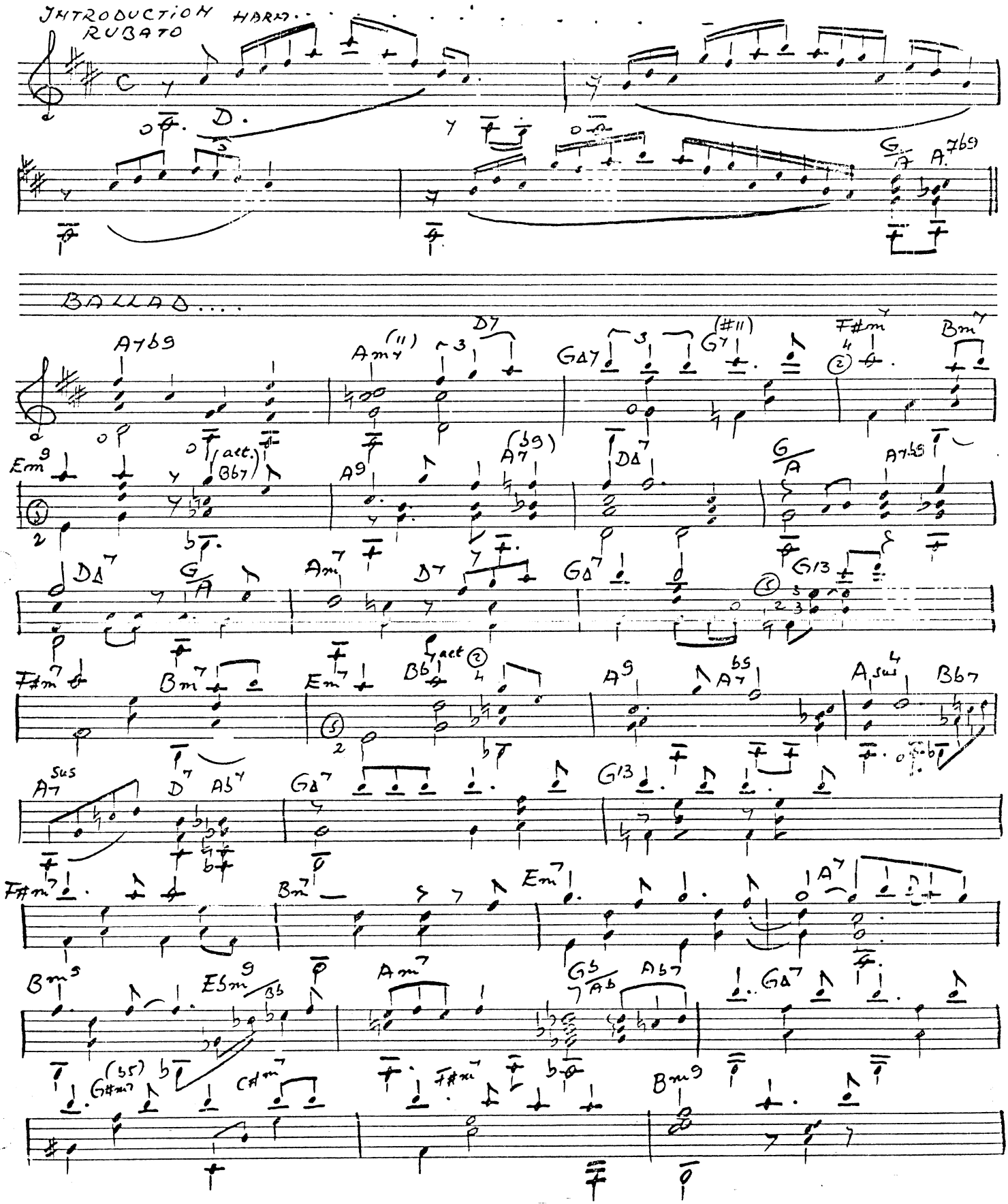
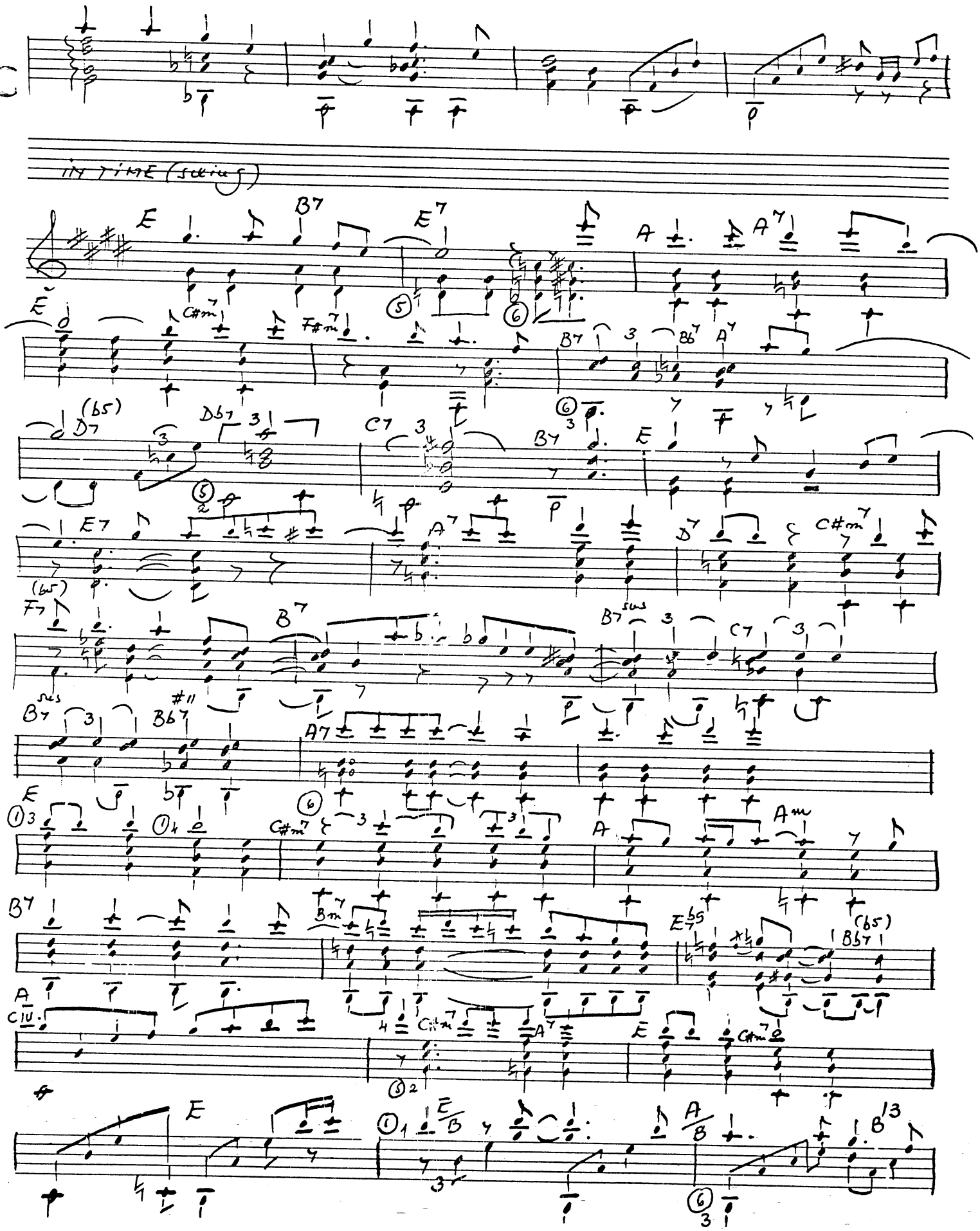
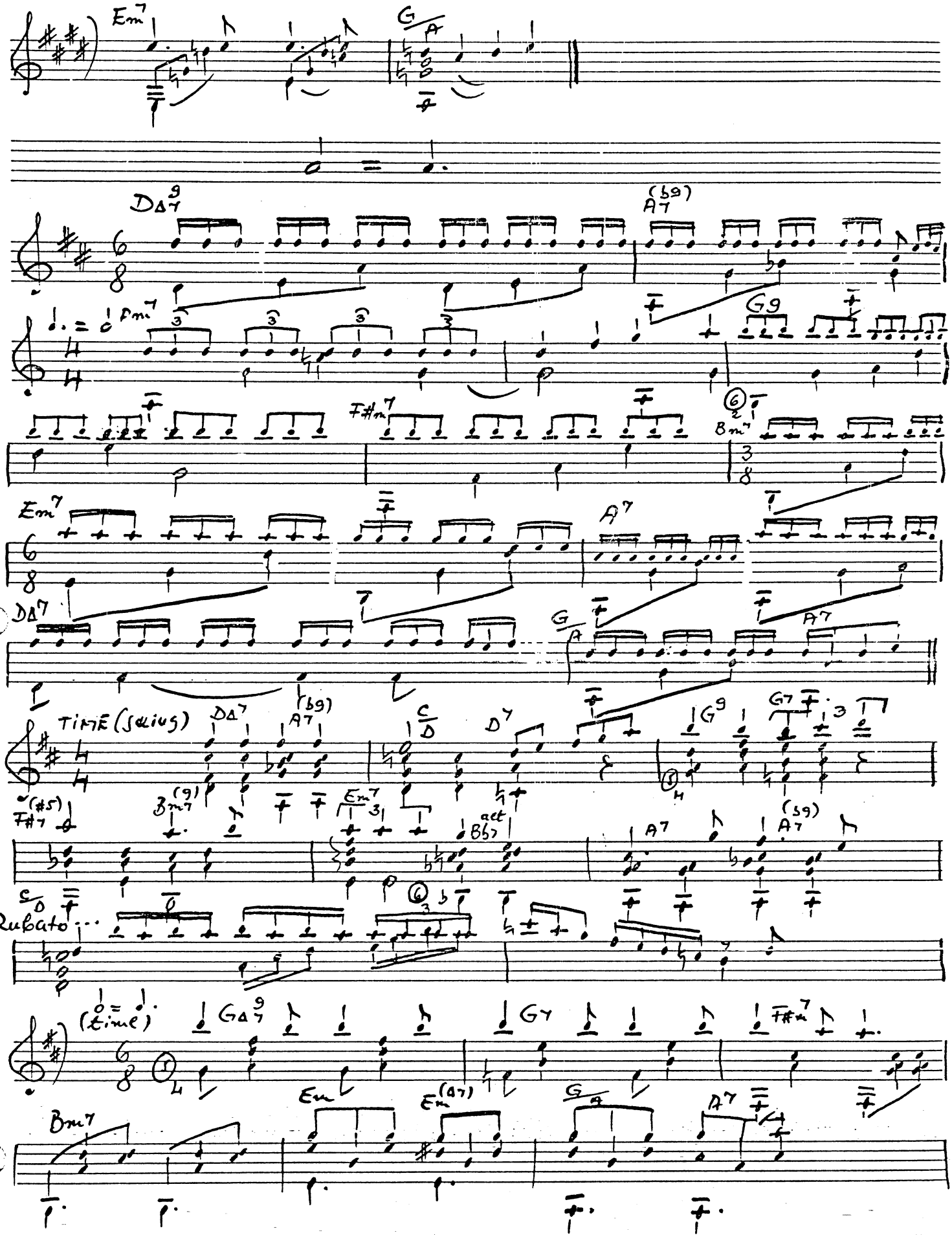
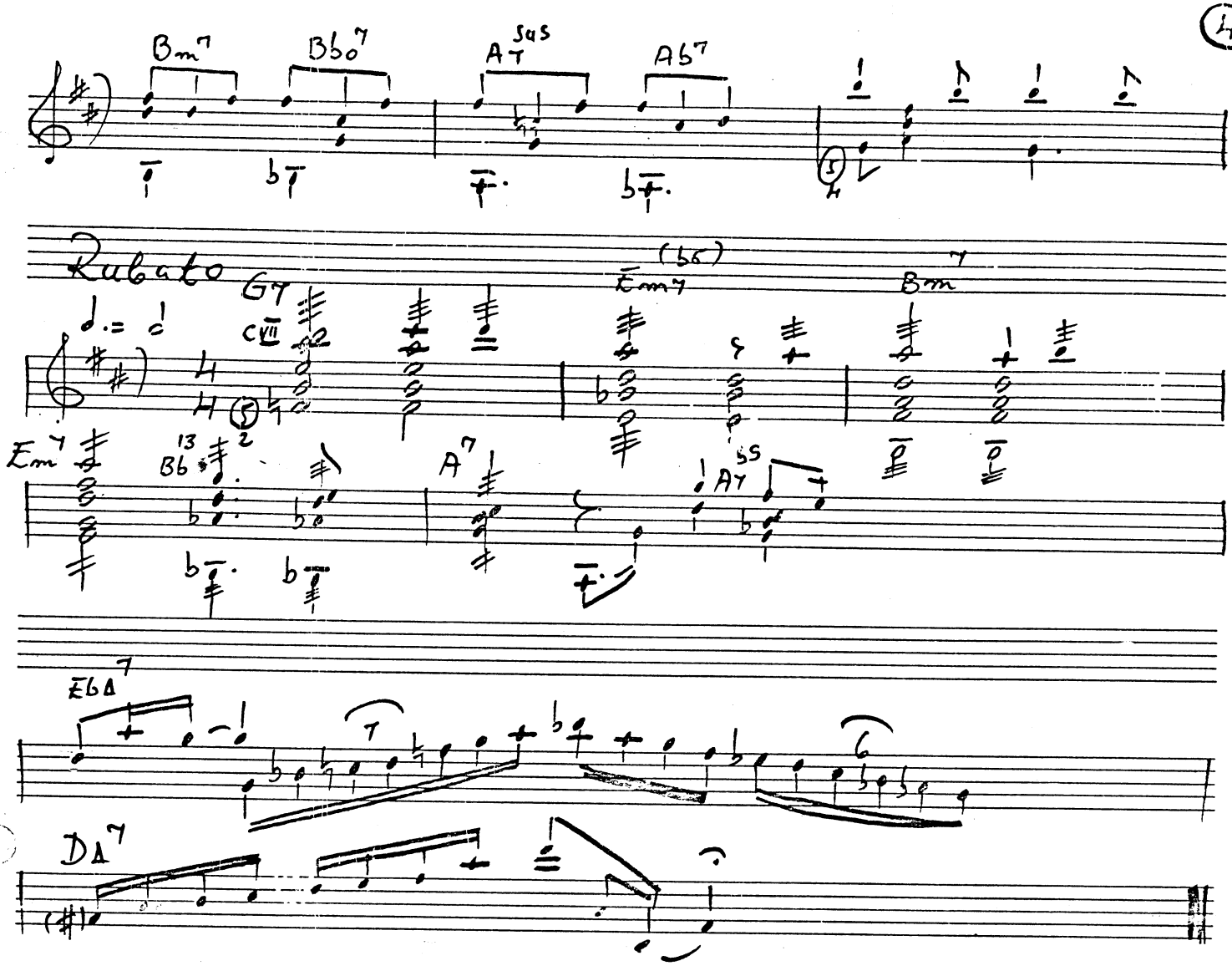


TRACK 1

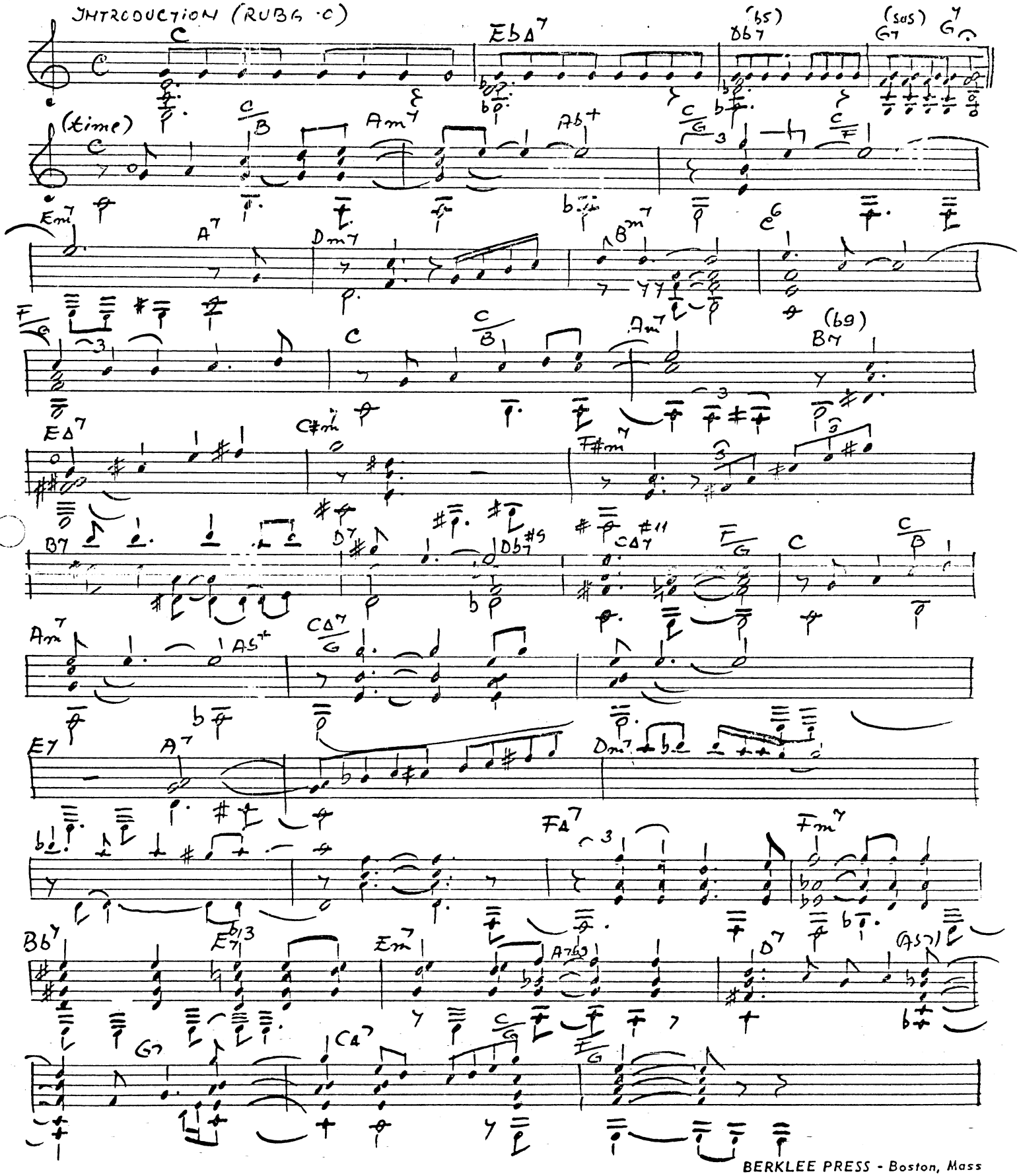


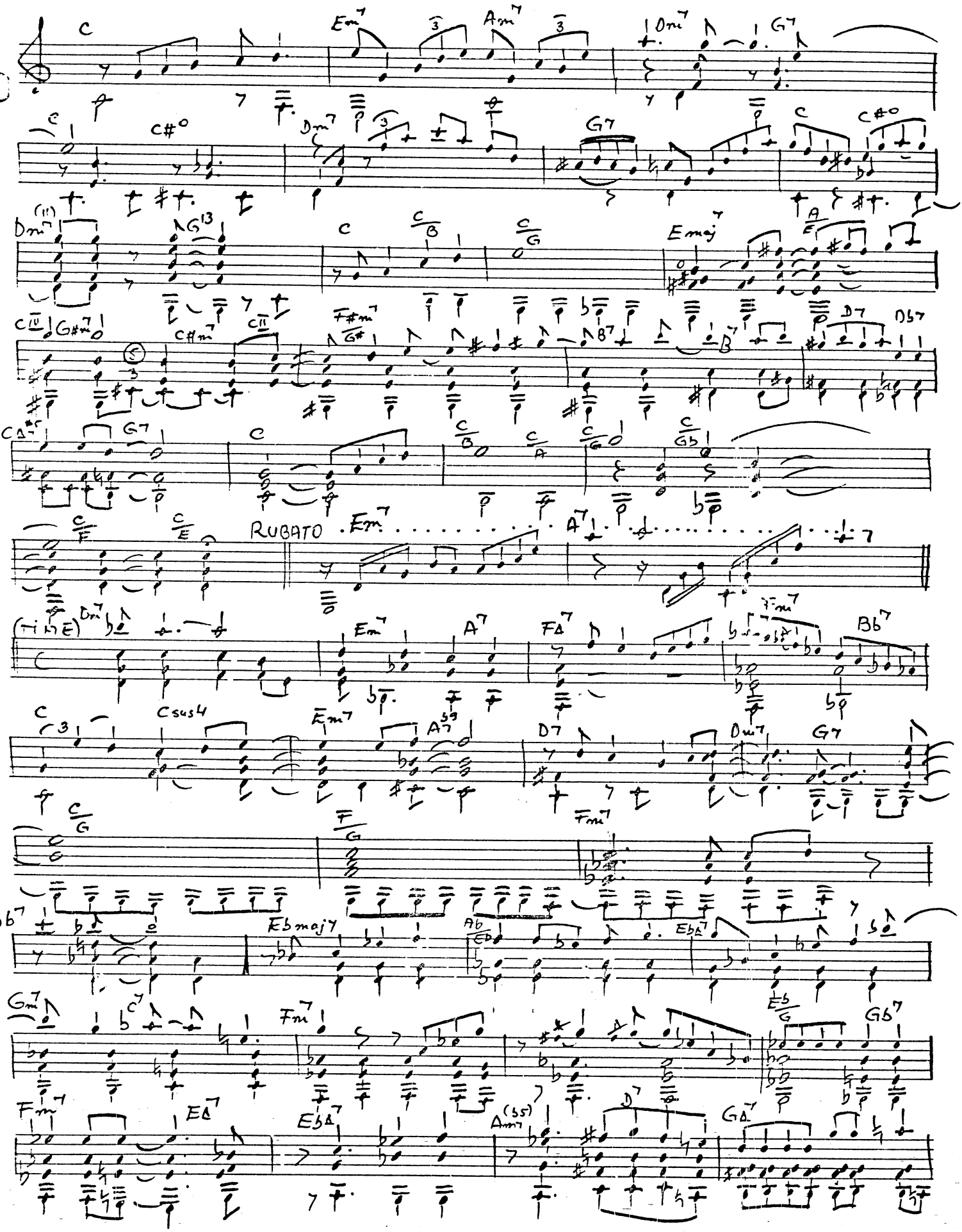

IN TIME (Swing)

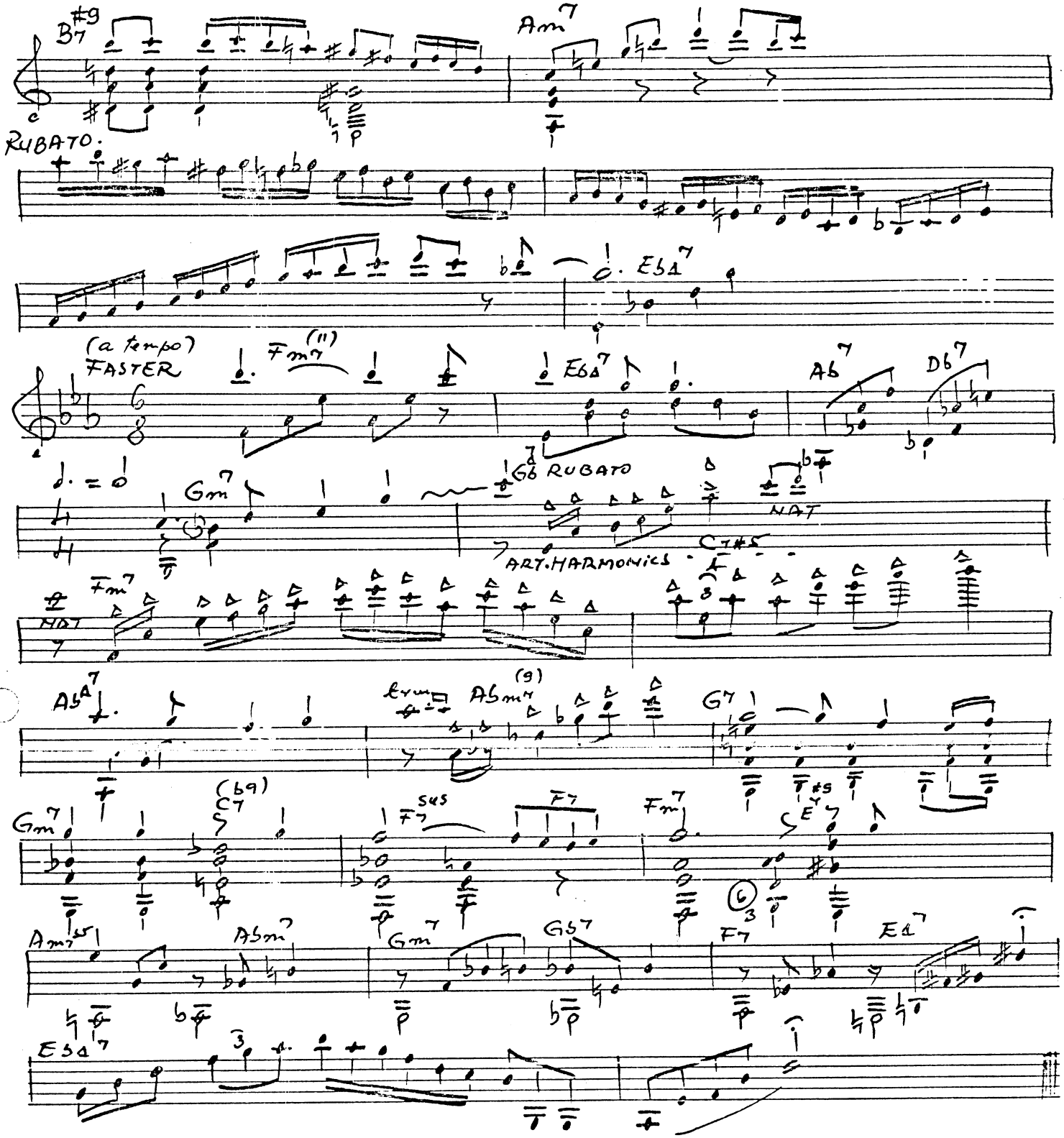

Em7
G/A
DΔ9
A7(b9)
Em7
G9
F#m7
Bm7
Em7
A7
DΔ7
G/A
A7
TIME (Swing)
DΔ7
A7(b9)
C/D
D7
G9
G7
F#7(#5)
Bm7(9)
Em7
Bb7alt
A7
A7(b9)
C/D
Rubato...
(Time)
GΔ9
G7
F#m7
Em
Em7(b7)
G/A
A7
Bm7

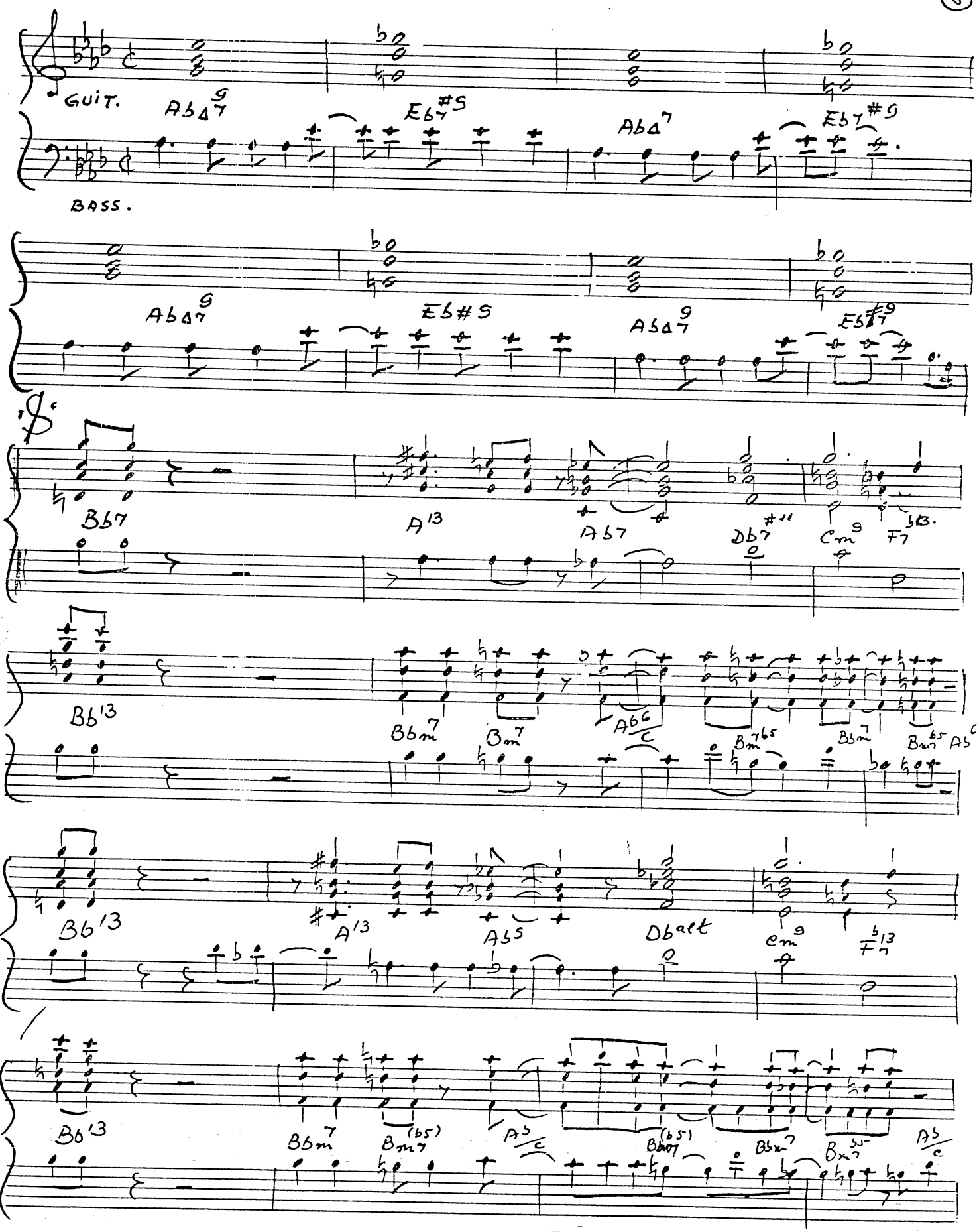

Bm7
Bb07
A7sus
A57
Rubato
G7
(b5)
Em7
Bm7
Em7
Bb13
A7
A7
Eb∆7
D∆7

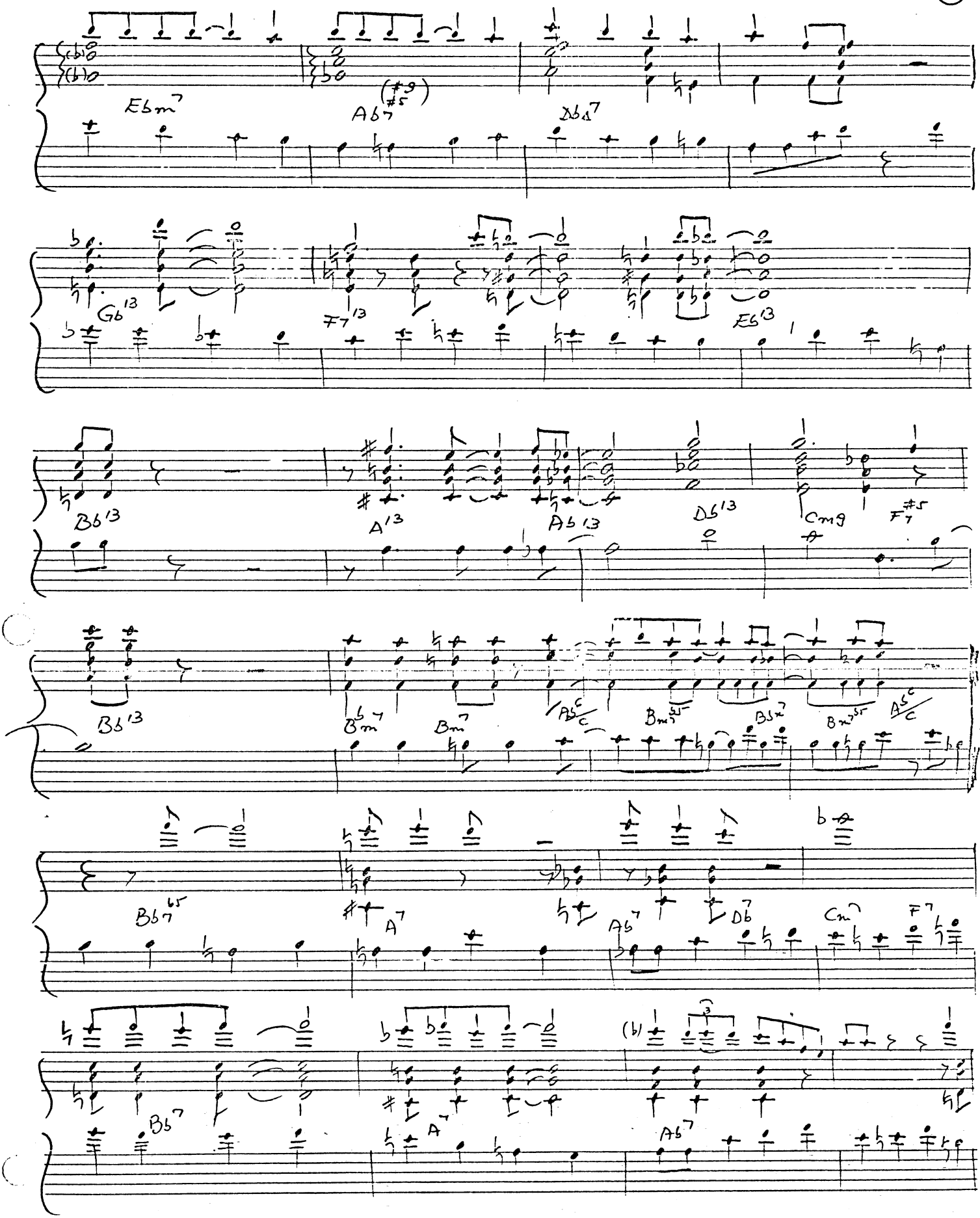
TRACK 2

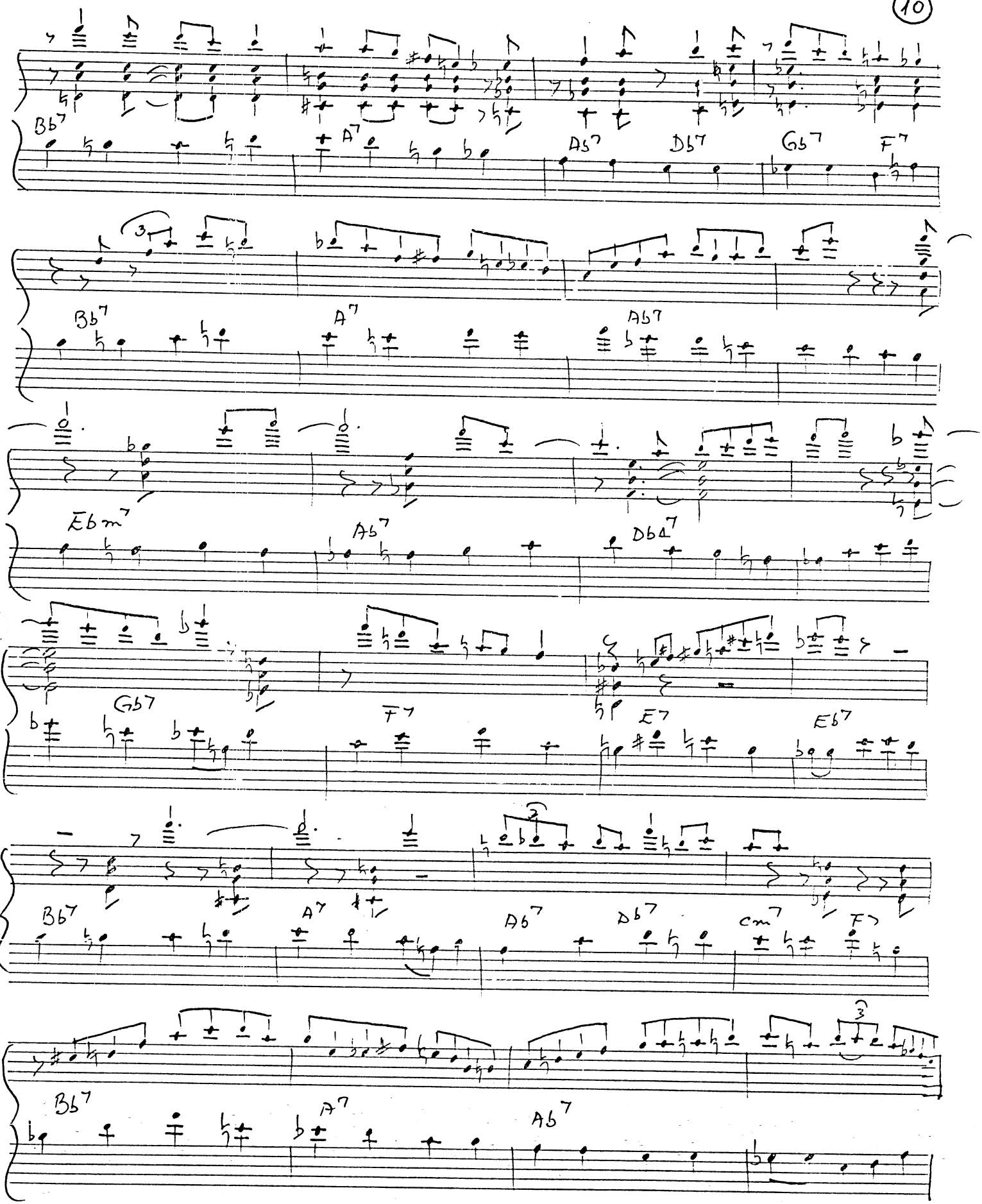

INTRODUCTION (RUBATO)
(time)
(b5)
(sus)
(b9)
BERKLEE PRESS - Boston, Mass

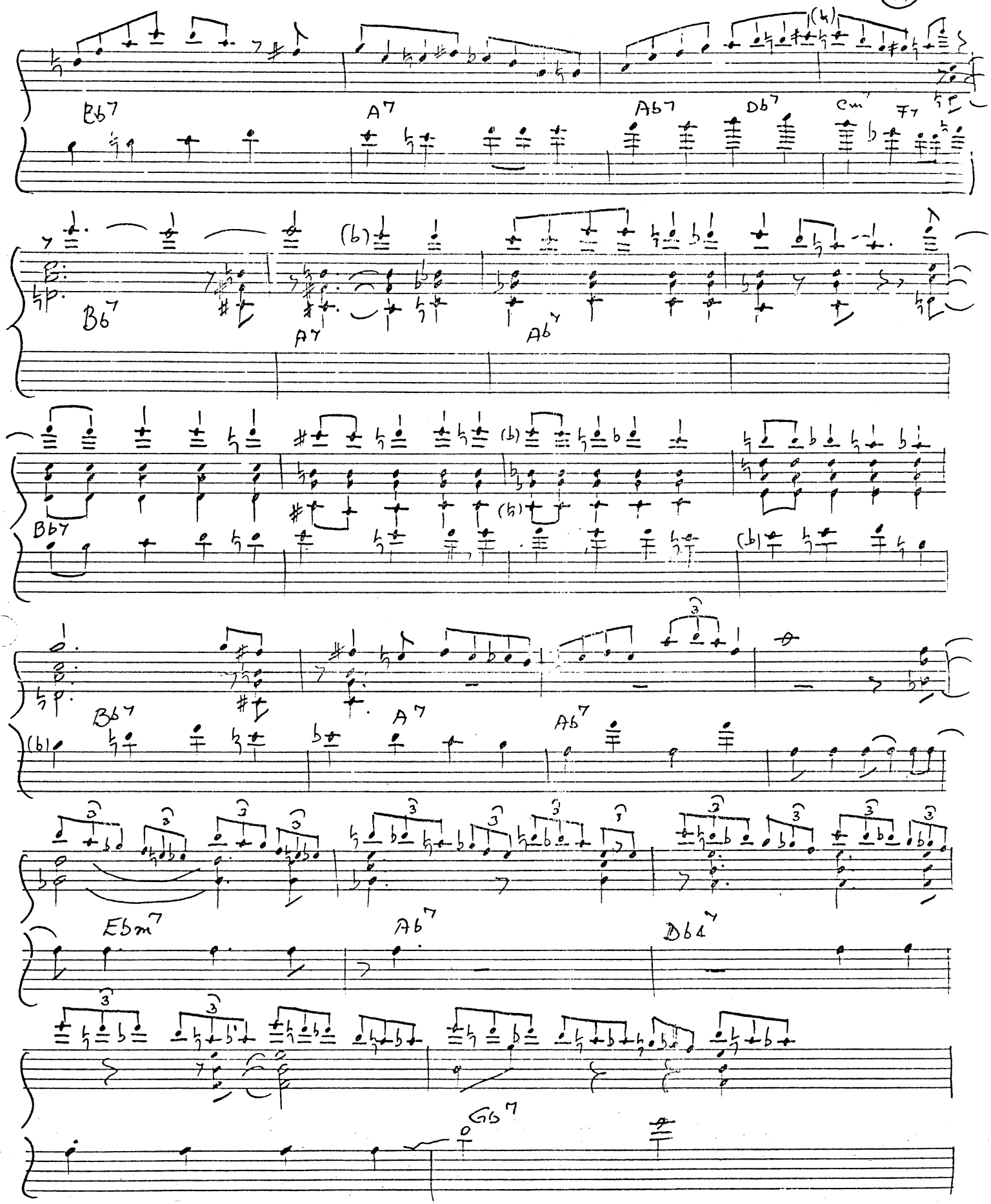

RUBATO

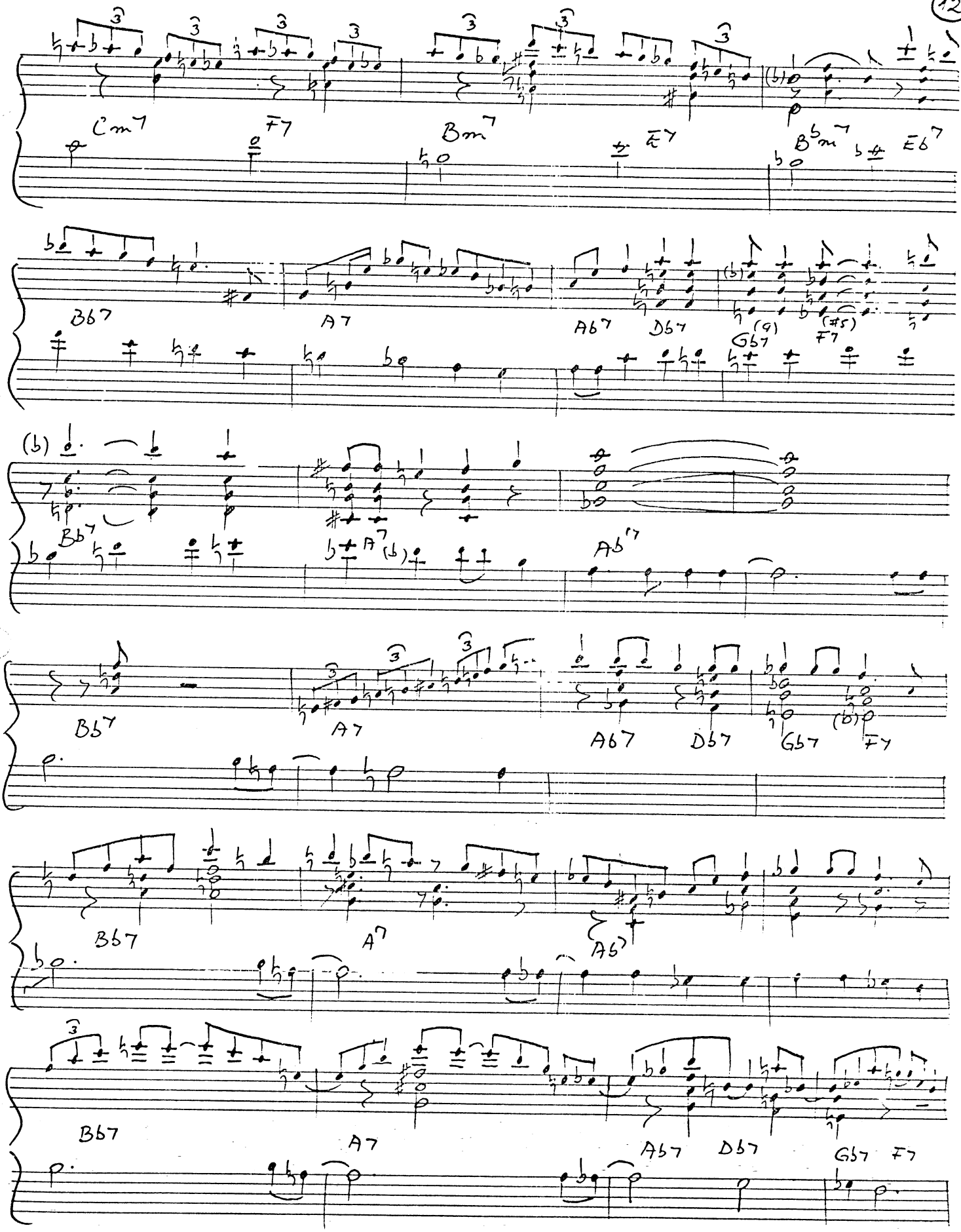

B7 #9
Am7
RUBATO.
Eb Δ 7
(a tempo)
FASTER
Fm7 (11)
Eb Δ 7
Ab7
Db7
Gm7
Gb RUBATO
NAT
ART. HARMONICS
C7#5
Fm7
NAT
Ab Δ 7
Ab m7 (9)
G7
C7 (b9)
F7 SUS
F7
Fm7
E7
Am7 b5
Ab m7
Gm7
G57
F7
E Δ 7
E Δ 7

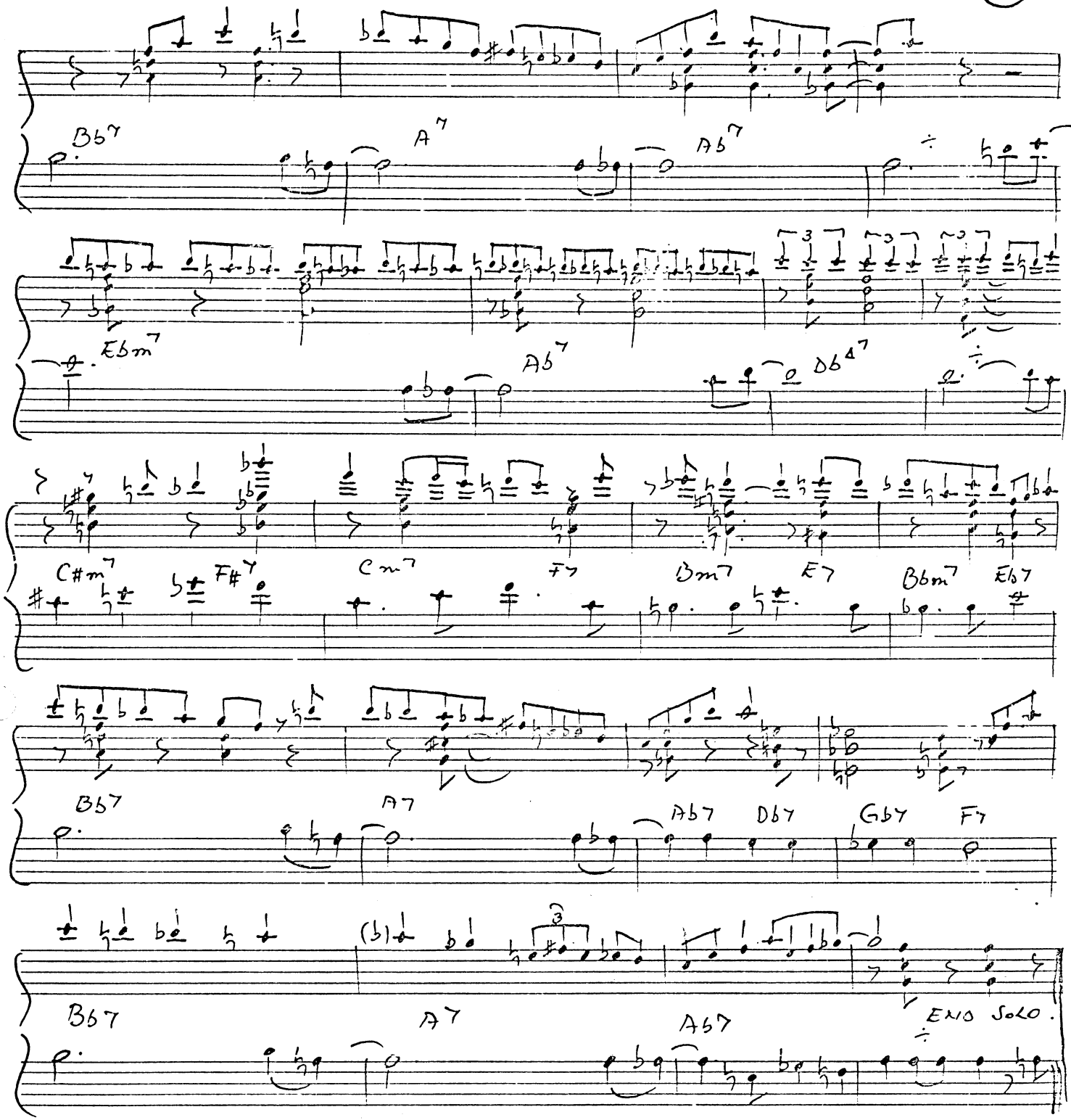

GUIT.
BASS.
Ab Δ7 9
Eb 7 #5
Ab Δ7
Eb 7 #5
Ab Δ7 9
Eb #5
Ab Δ7 9
Eb 7 9
Bb7
A13
Ab7
Db7 #11
Cm9
F7 b13
Bb13
Bbm7
Bm7
Abdim
C
Bbm7 b5
Bbm7
Bbm7 b5
Ab C
Bb13
A13
Ab5
Dbalt
Cm9
F7 b13
Bb13
Bbm7
Bm7 (b5)
Ab5 C
Bbm7 (b5)
Bbm7
Bbm7
Ab5 C


Eb m7
Ab7
(#9 #5)
Db Δ7
Gb13
F7 13
Eb13
Bb13
A13
Ab13
Db13
Cmg
F7 #5
Bb13
Bb m7
Bm7
Ab c/c
Bm7 b5
Bb m7
Ab c/c
FINE
Bb7 b5
A7
Ab7
Db7
Cm7
F7
Bb7
A7
Ab7


Bb7
A7
Ab7
Db7
Gb7
F7
Bb7
A7
Ab7
Ebm7
Ab7
Db7
Gb7
F7
E7
Eb7
Bb7
A7
Ab7
Db7
Cm7
F7
Bb7
A7
Ab7


Bb7
A7
Ab7
Db7
Cm7
F7
Bb7
A7
Ab7
Bb7
A7
Ab7
Ebm7
Ab7
Db7
Gb7

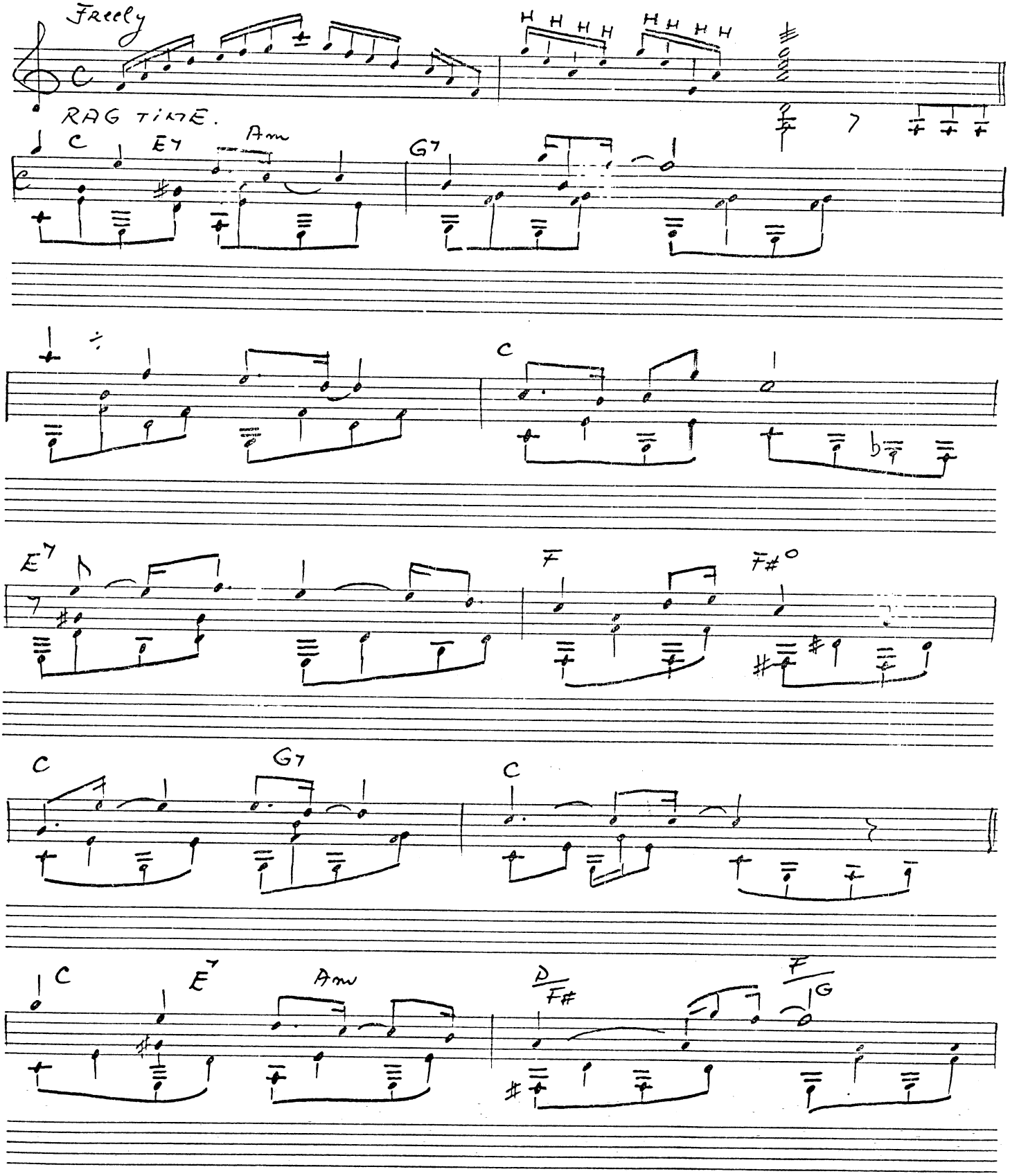

Cm7
F7
Bm7
E7
B♭m7
E♭7
B♭7
A7
A♭7
D♭7
G♭7
(9)
(#5)
F7
(♭)
B♭7
A7
A♭7
D♭7
G♭7
F7

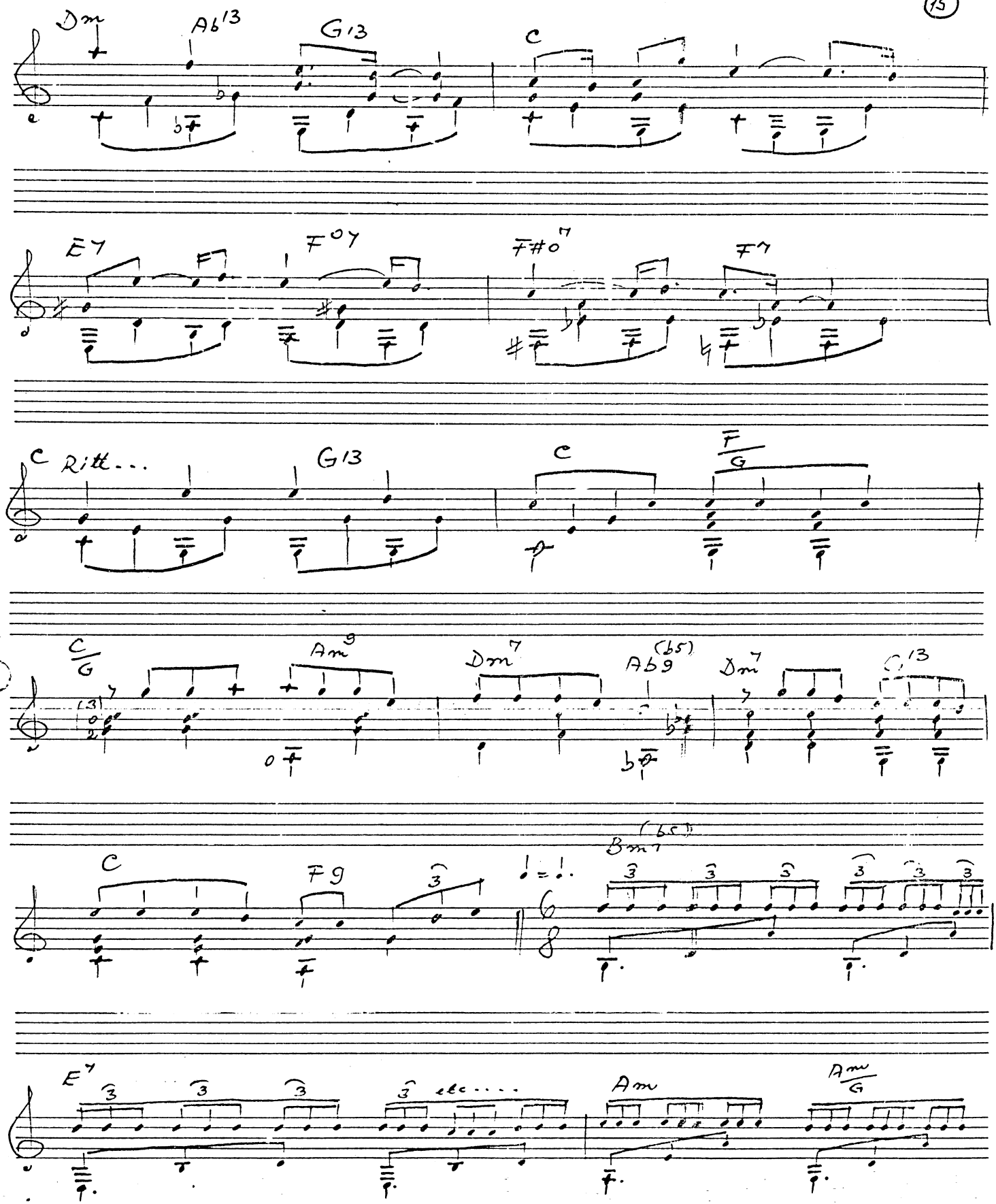


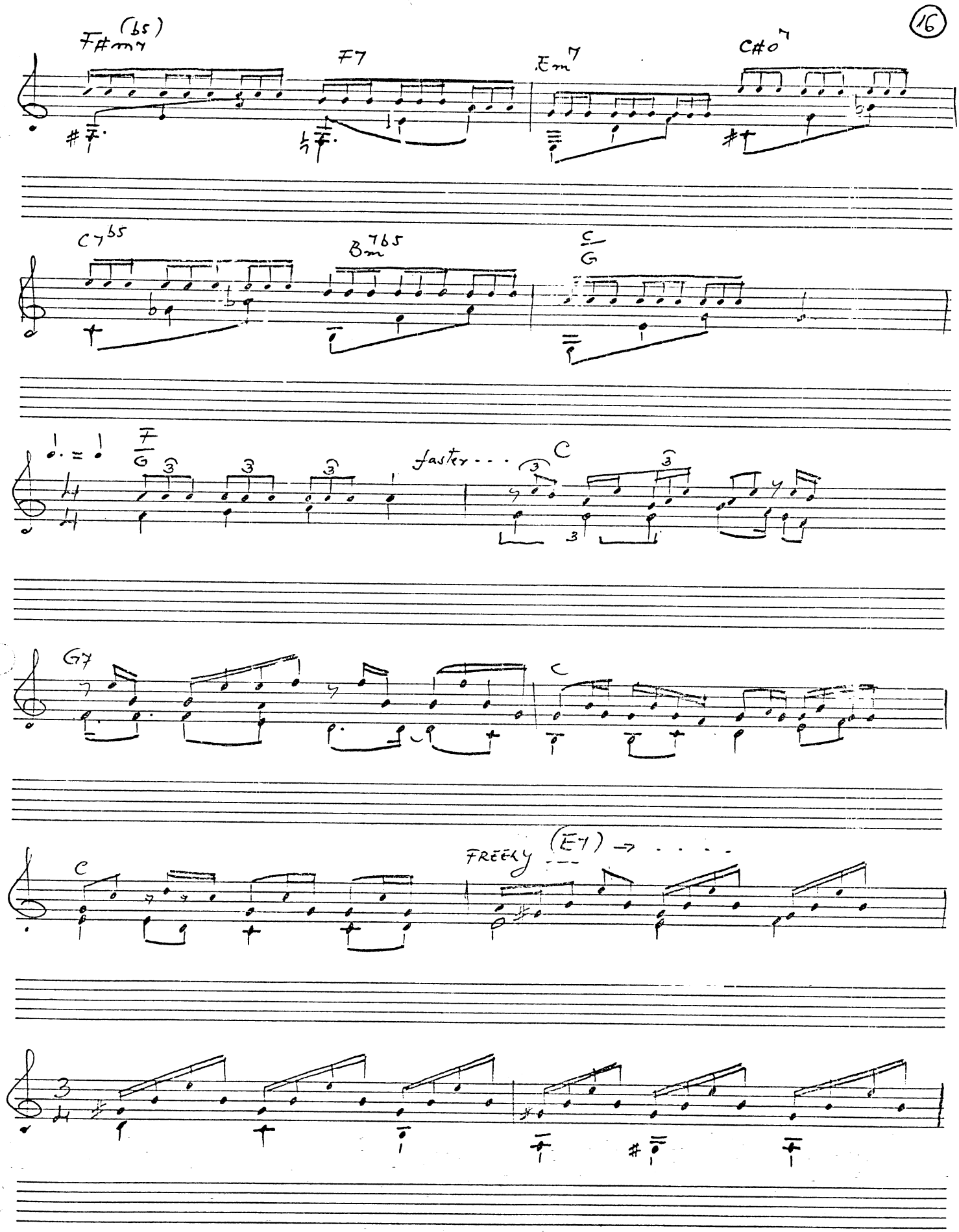
BASS Solo ~~~~~~~~ and . . . . . .

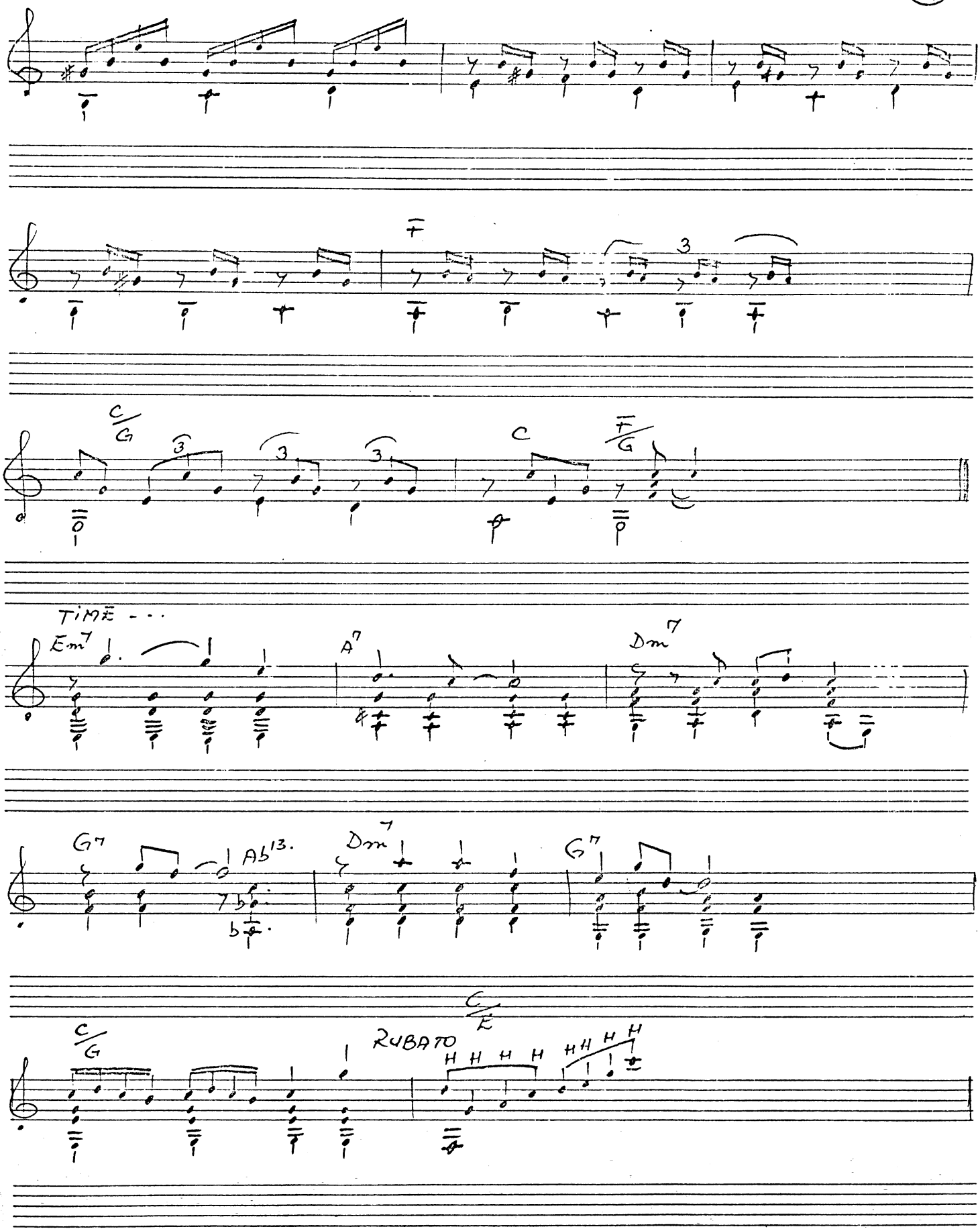
DAL $ ad FINE.

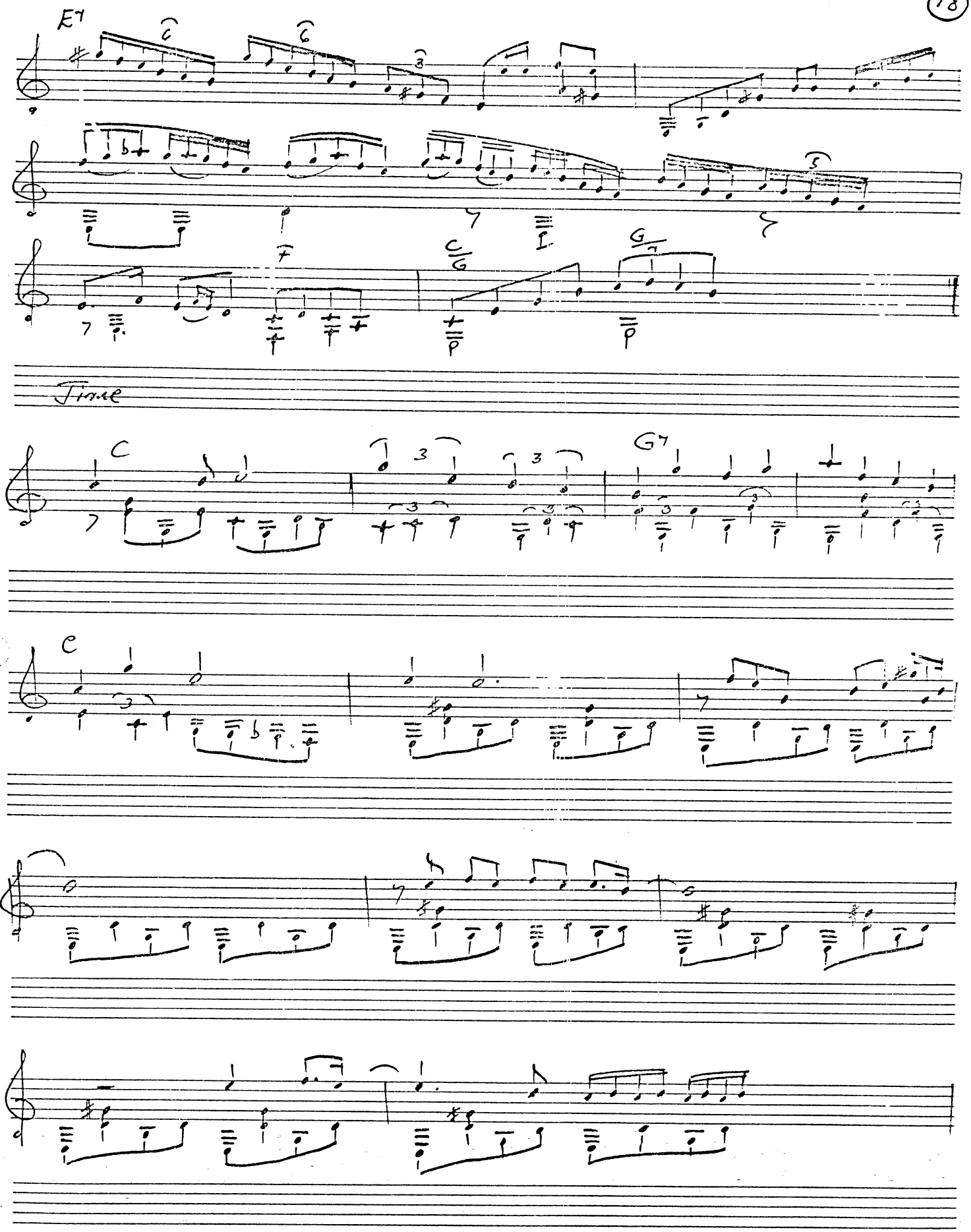
TRACK 4

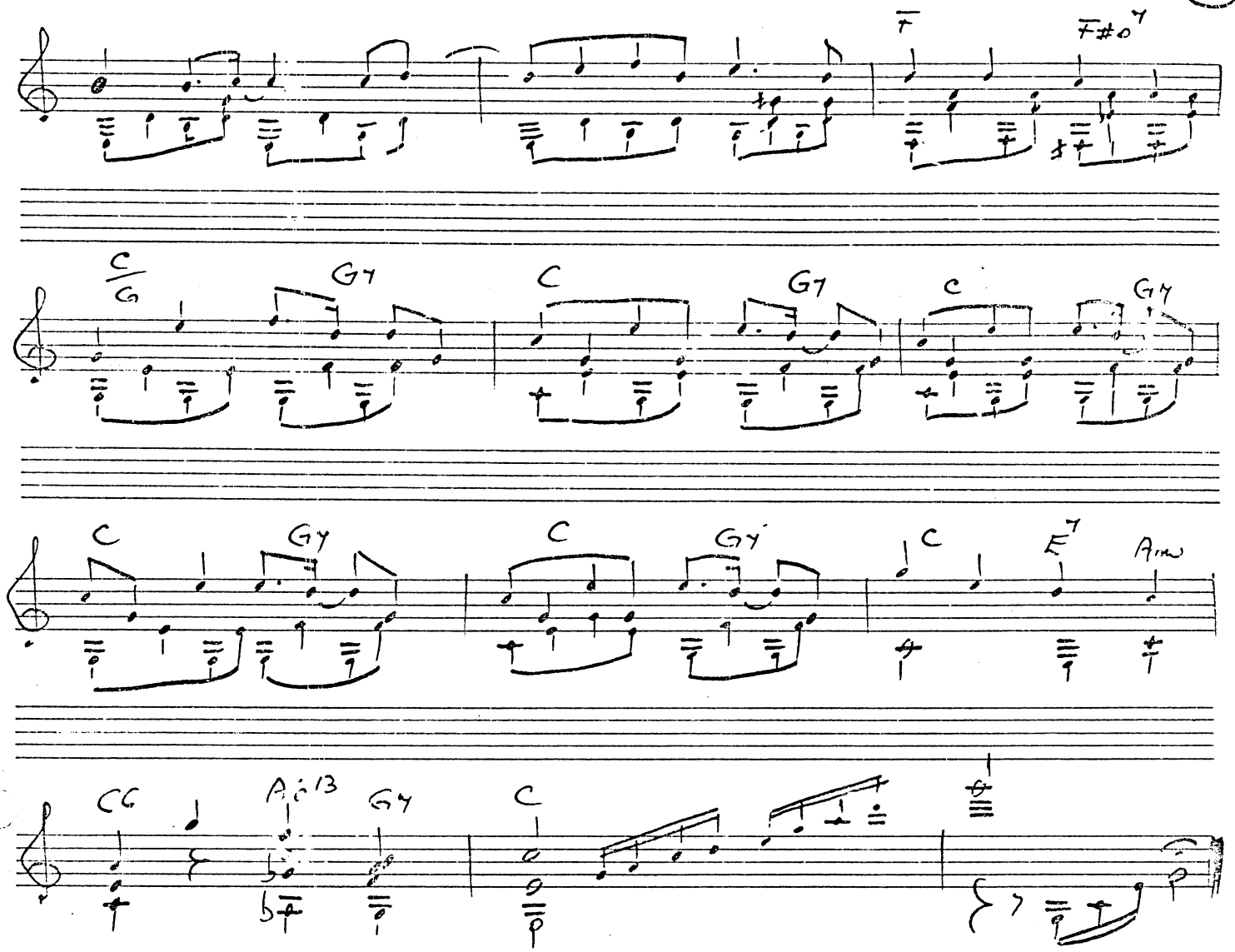


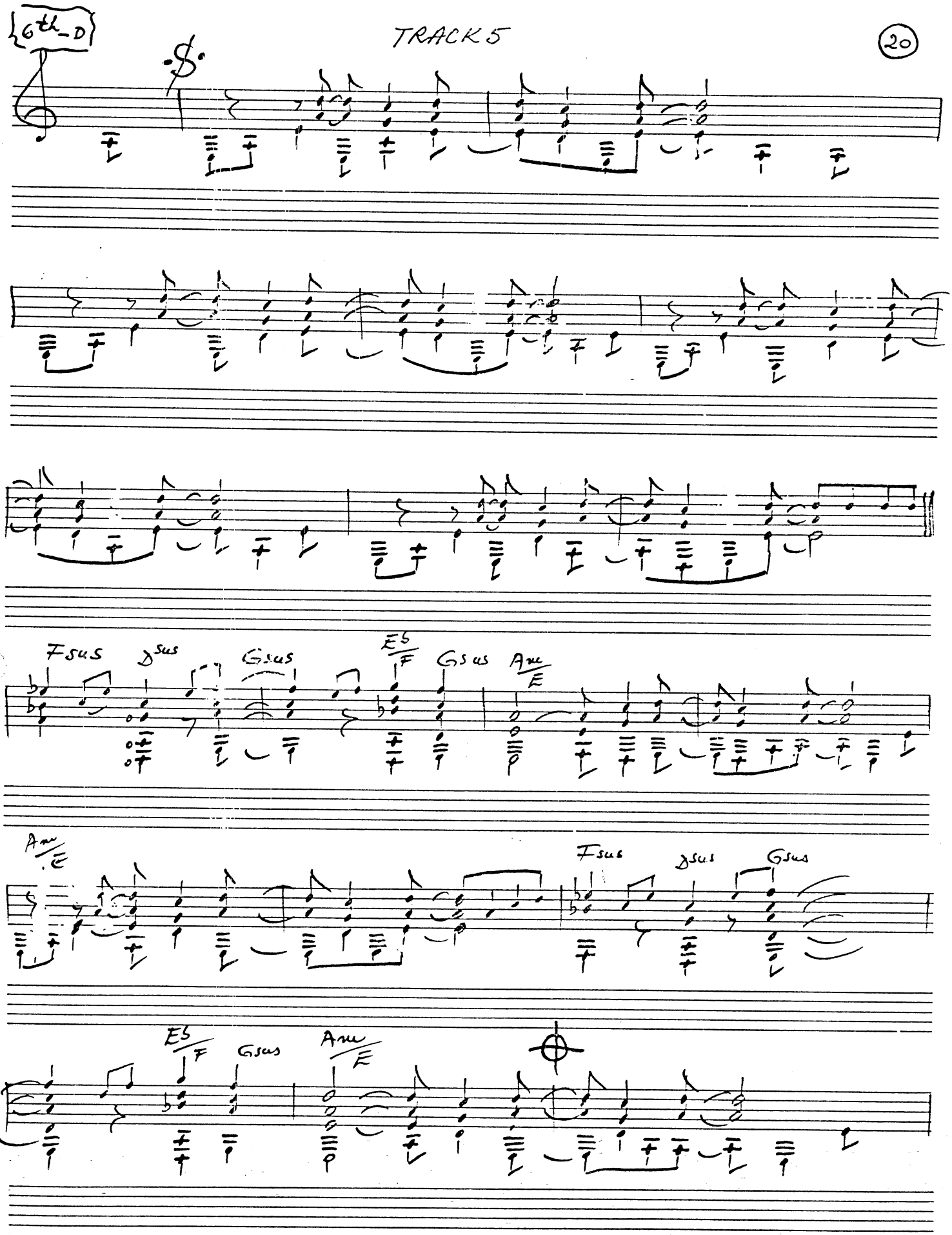

Dm
Ab13
G13
C
E7
F°7
F#°7
F7
C Rit...
G13
C
F
G
C/G
Am9
Dm7
Ab9 (b5)
Dm7
C13
C
Fg
Bm7 (b5)
E7
3 3 3 etc....
Am
Am/G

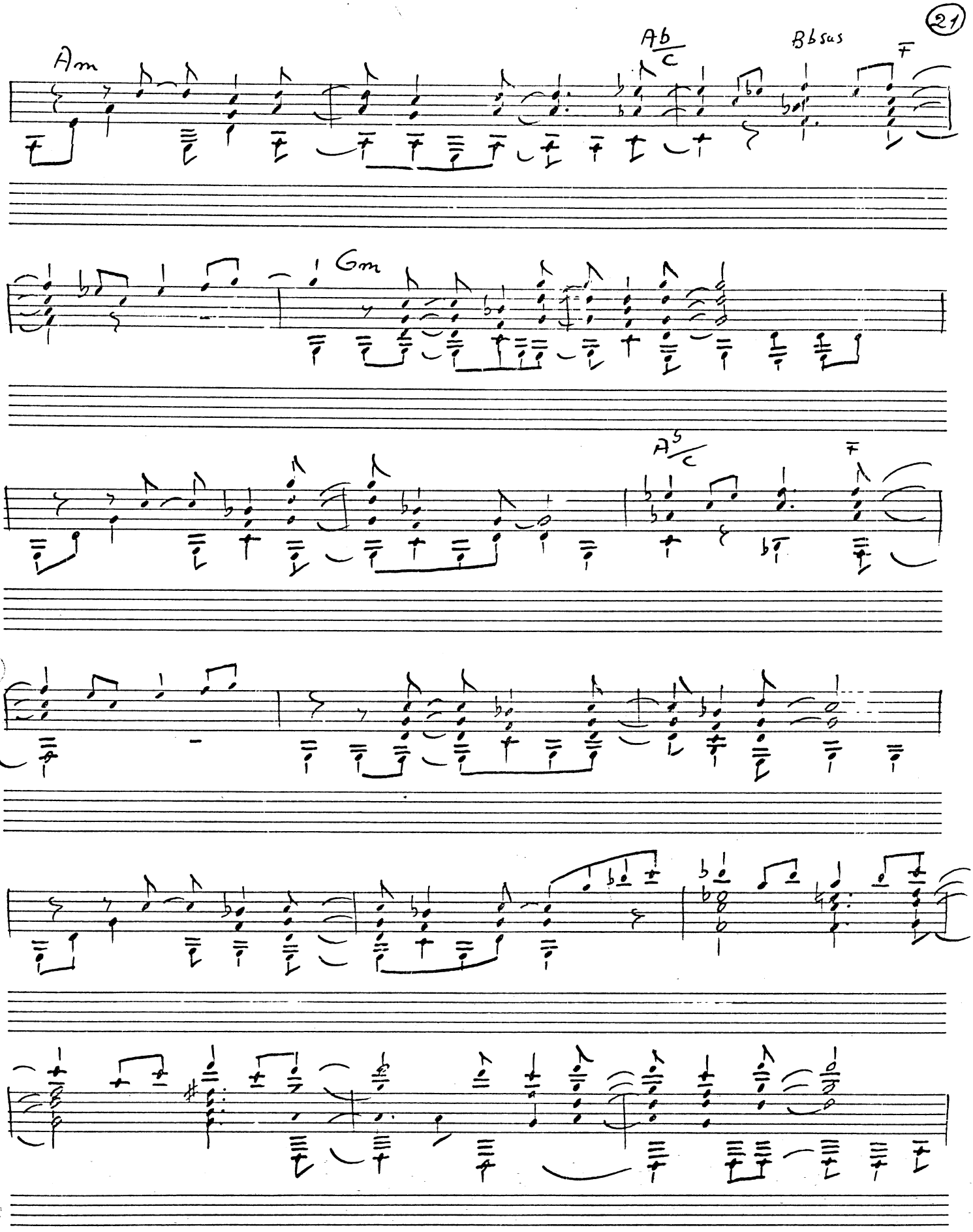

F#m7(b5)
F7
Em7
C#o7
C7b5
Bm7b5
C/G
faster . . .
C
G7
C
C
FREELY
(E7) →

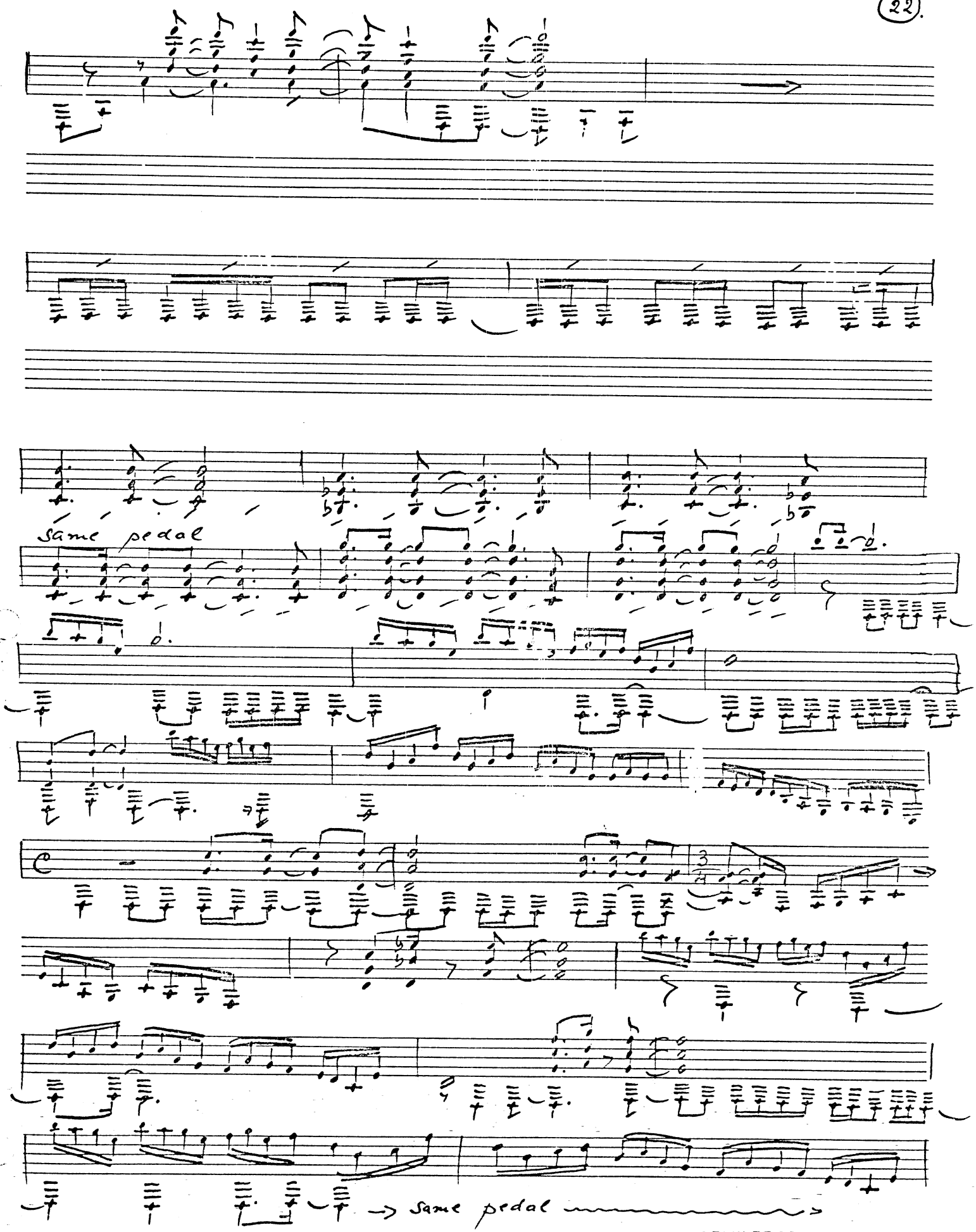

C/G
C
F/G
TIME - - -
Em7
A7
Dm7
G7
Ab13.
Dm7
G7
C/G
C/E
RUBATO

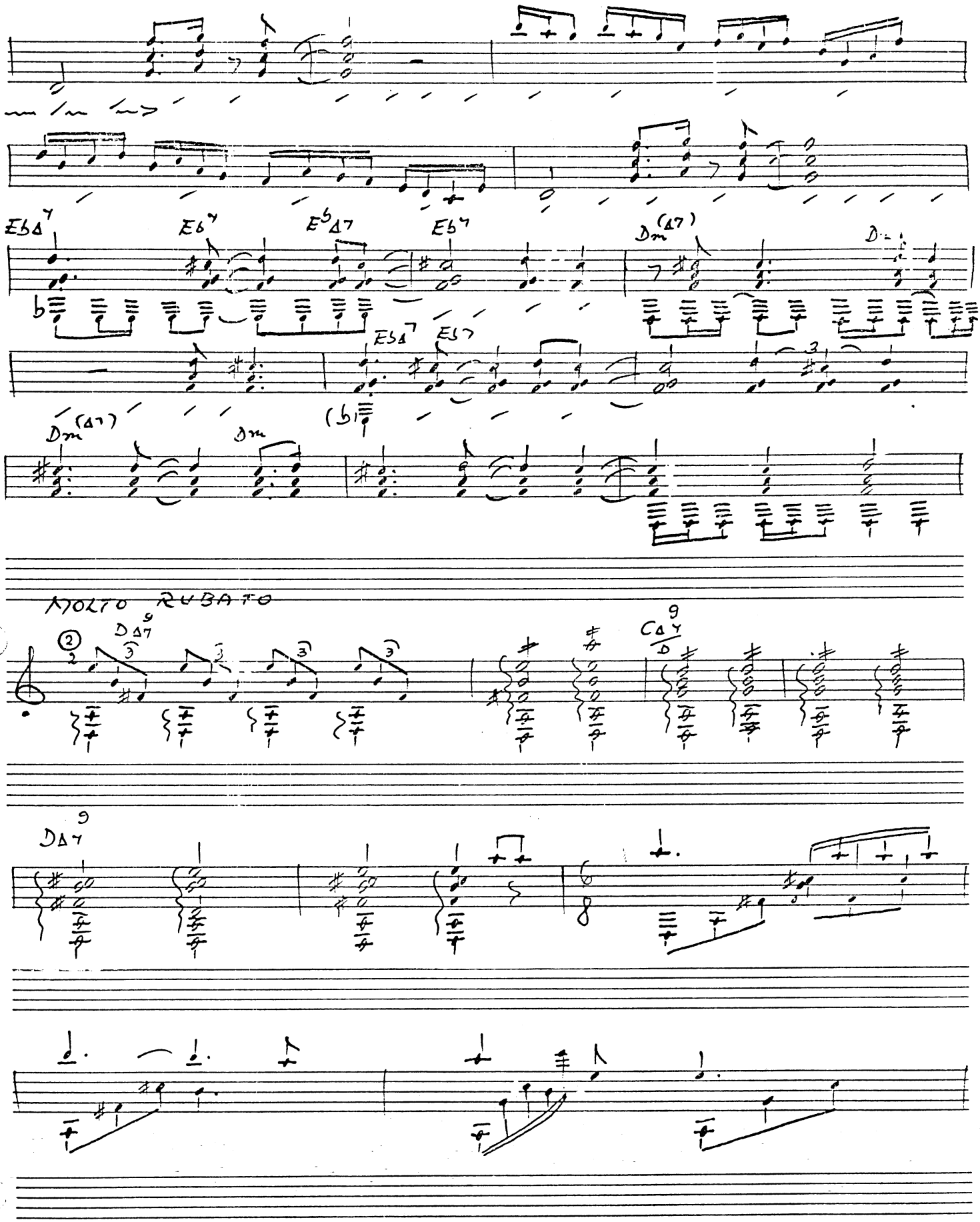

E7
C
G
F
C/G
G7
Fine
C
G7
C

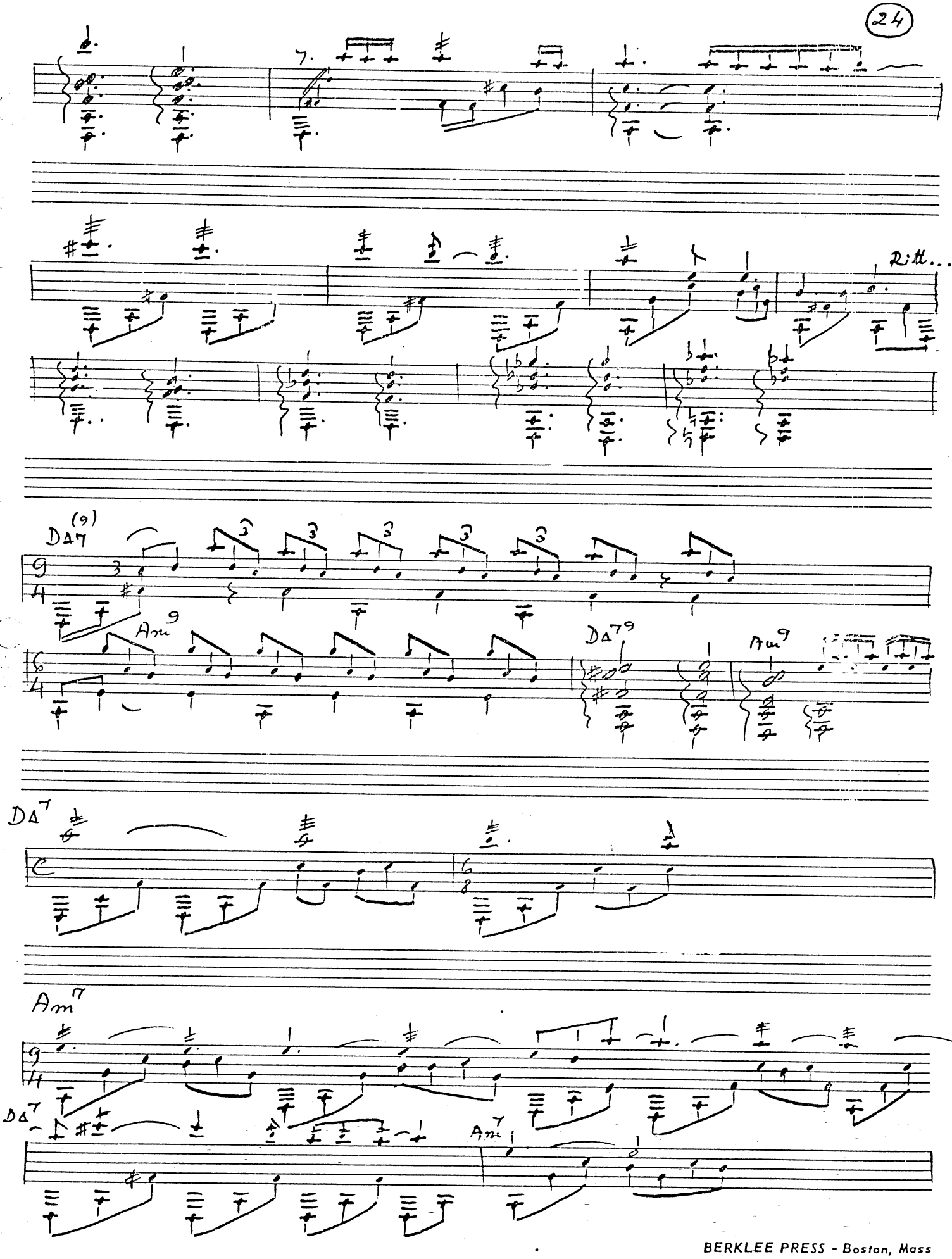

F
F#o7
C/G
G7
C
G7
C
G7
C
G7
C
E7
Am
C6
Ab13
G7
C

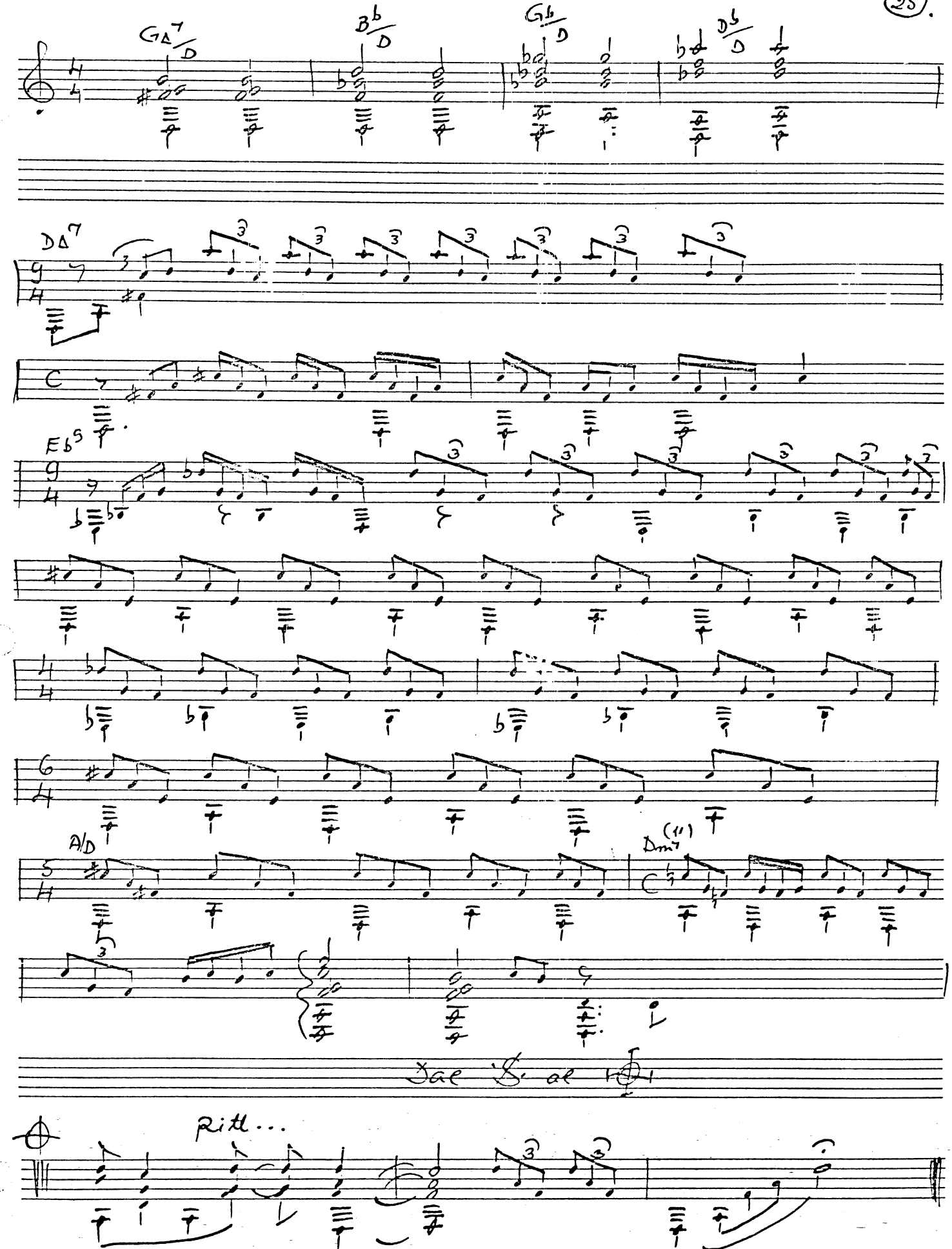

6th_D
Fsus
Dsus
Gsus
Eb/F
Gsus
Am/E
Am/E
Fsus
Dsus
Gsus
Eb/F
Gsus
Am/E


Am
Ab/C
Bbsus
F
Gm
A5/C
F

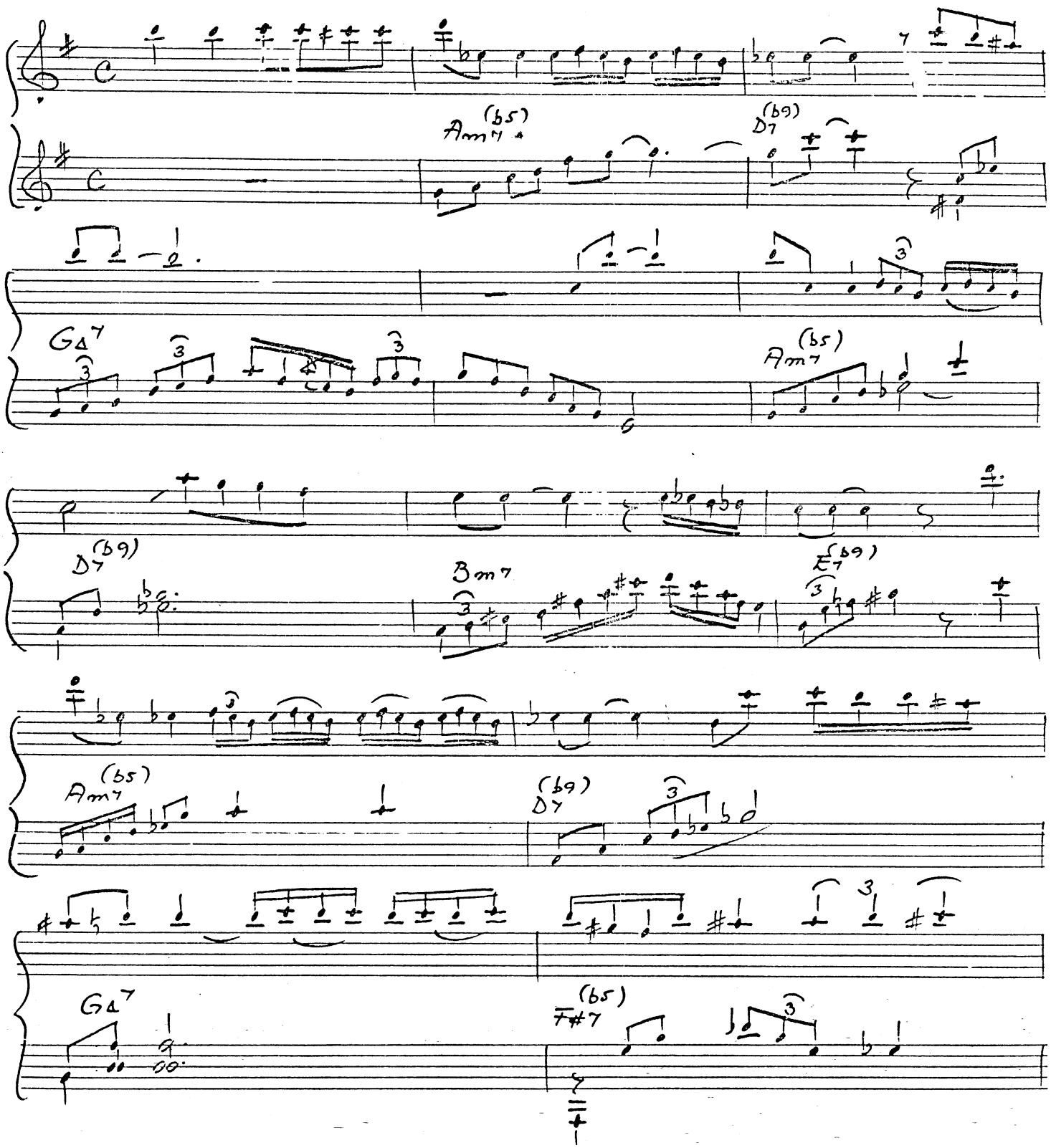

same pedal
same pedal


Eb Δ 7
Eb 7
E Δ 7
Eb 7
Dm (Δ7)
Eb Δ 7
Eb 7
Dm (Δ7)
Dm
MOLTO RUBATO
D Δ 7
C Δ 7
D Δ 7

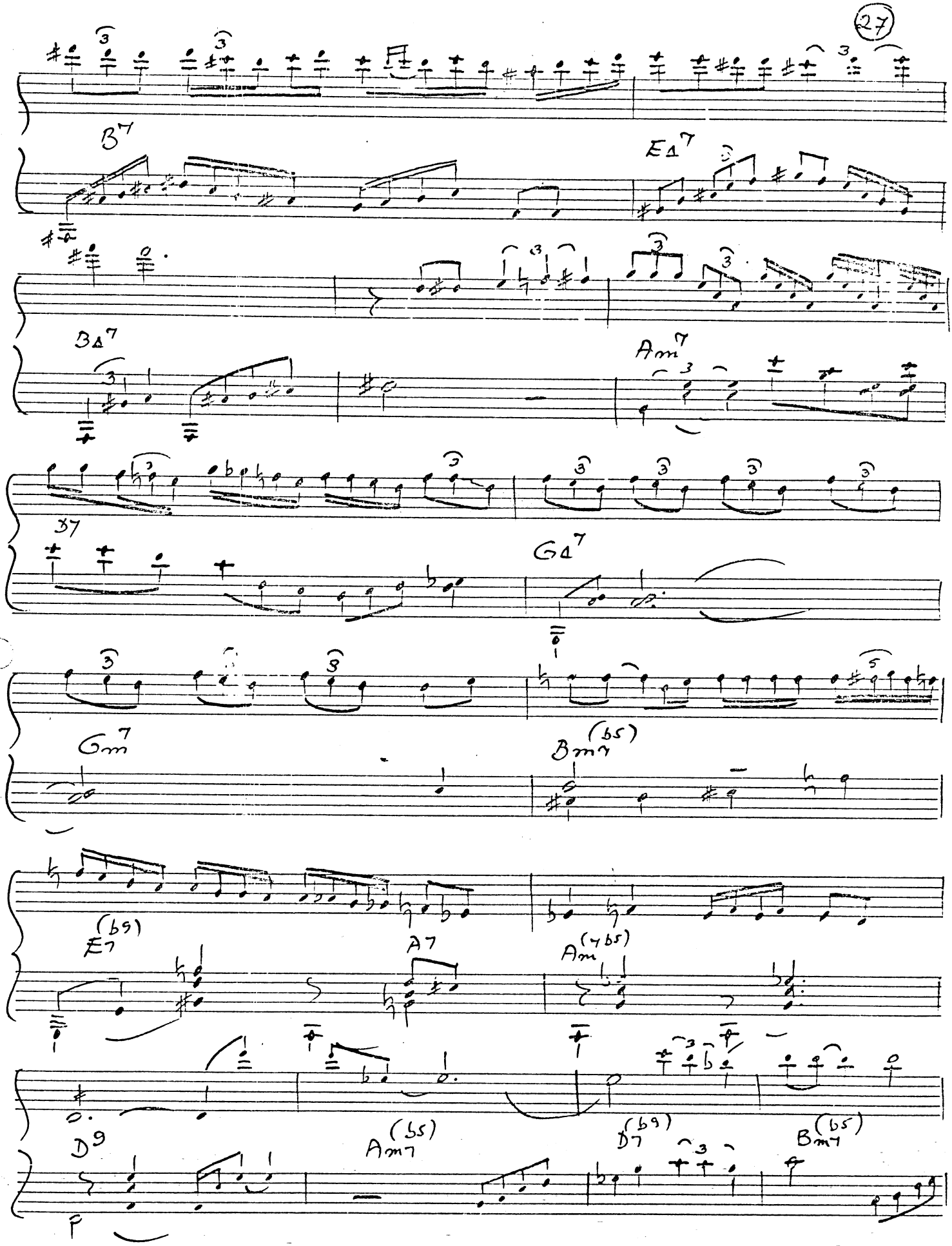

Rit...
(9)
DΔ7
Am9
DΔ79
Am9
DΔ7
Am7
DΔ7
Am7

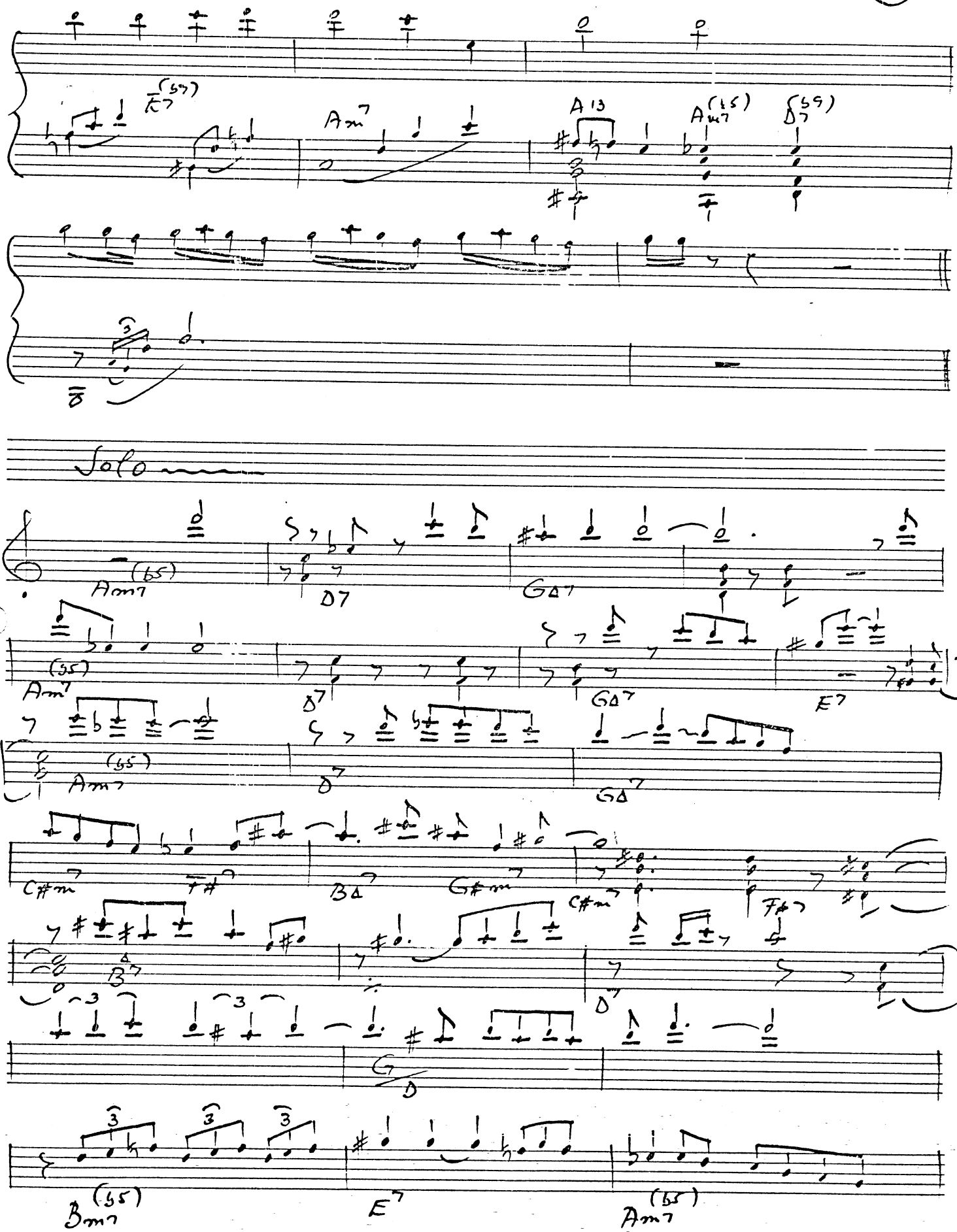


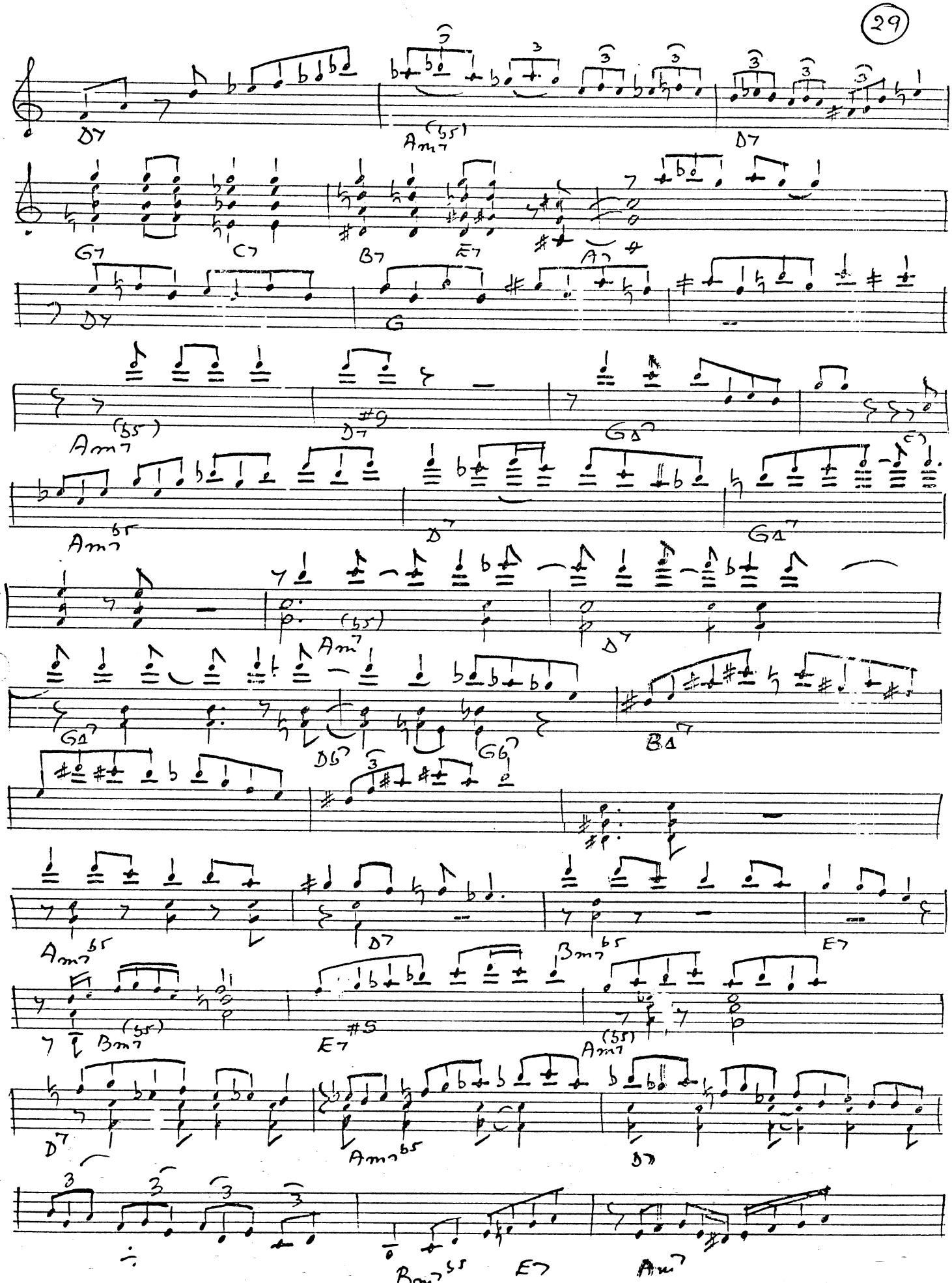
TRACK 6

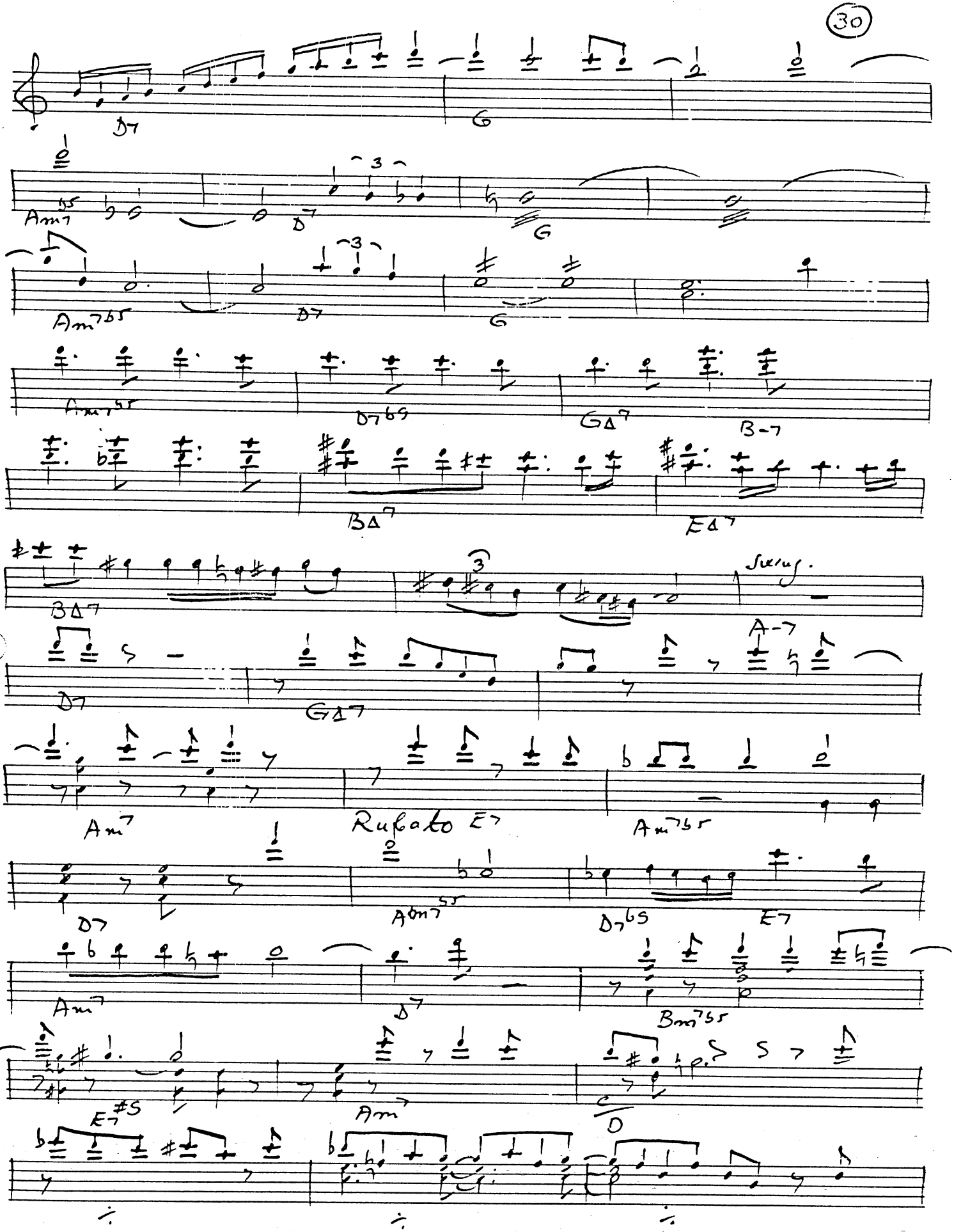


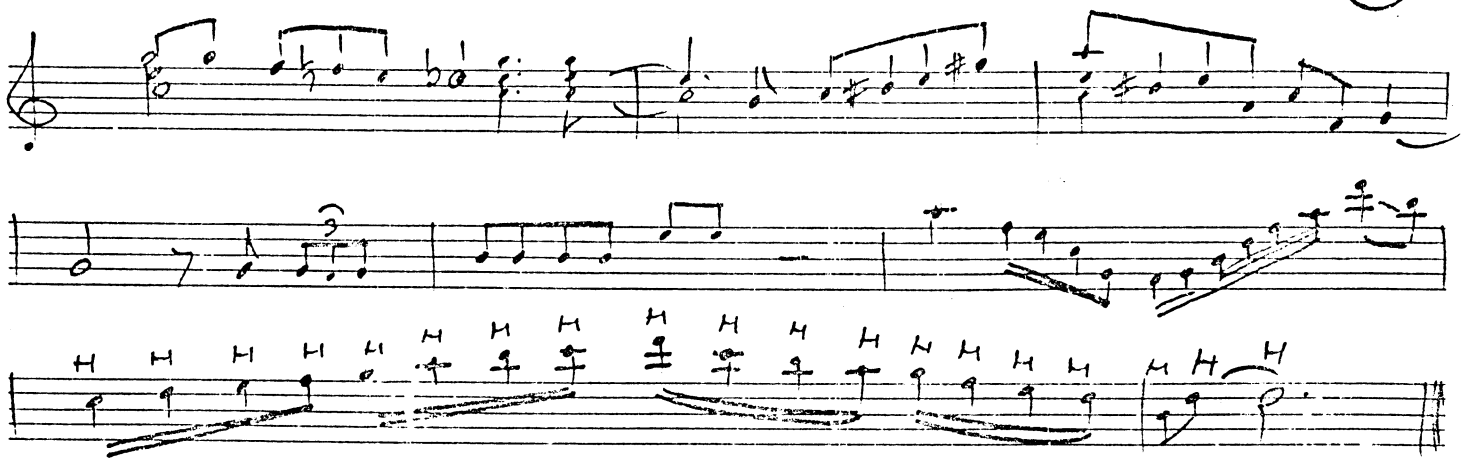
BERKLEE PRESS - Boston, Mass


B7
EΔ7
BΔ7
Am7
37
GΔ7
Gm7
Bm7(b5)
E7(b5)
A7
Am(+b5)
D9
Am7(b5)
D7(b9)
Bm7(b5)
P


E7 (♭9)
Am7
A13
Am7 (♭5)
D7 (♭9)
3
Solo
Am7 (♭5)
D7
GΔ7
Am7 (♭5)
D7
GΔ7
E7
Am7 (♭5)
D7
GΔ7
C#m7
F#7
BΔ
G#m7
C#m7
F#7
B7
D7
G
D
3
3
3
Bm7 (♭5)
E7
Am7 (♭5)

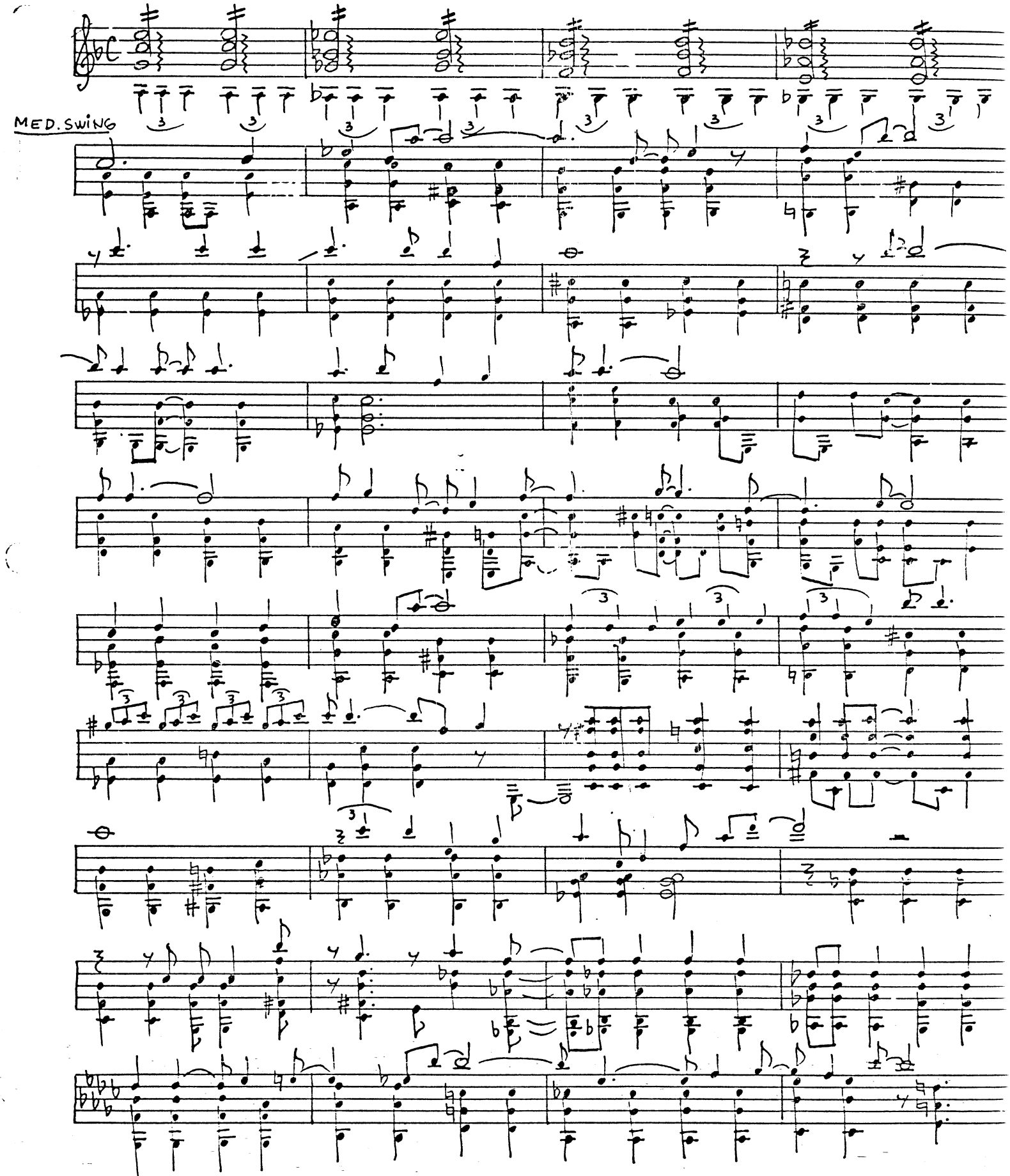

D7
Am7 (55)
D7
G7
C7
B7
E7
A7
D7
G
Am7 (55)
D7 #9
GΔ7
Am7 55
D7
GΔ7
Am7 (55)
D7
GΔ7
DG7
GG7
BΔ7
Am7 55
D7
Bm7 55
E7
Bm7 (55)
E7 #5
Am7 (55)
D7
Am7 55
D7
Bm7 55
E7
Am7

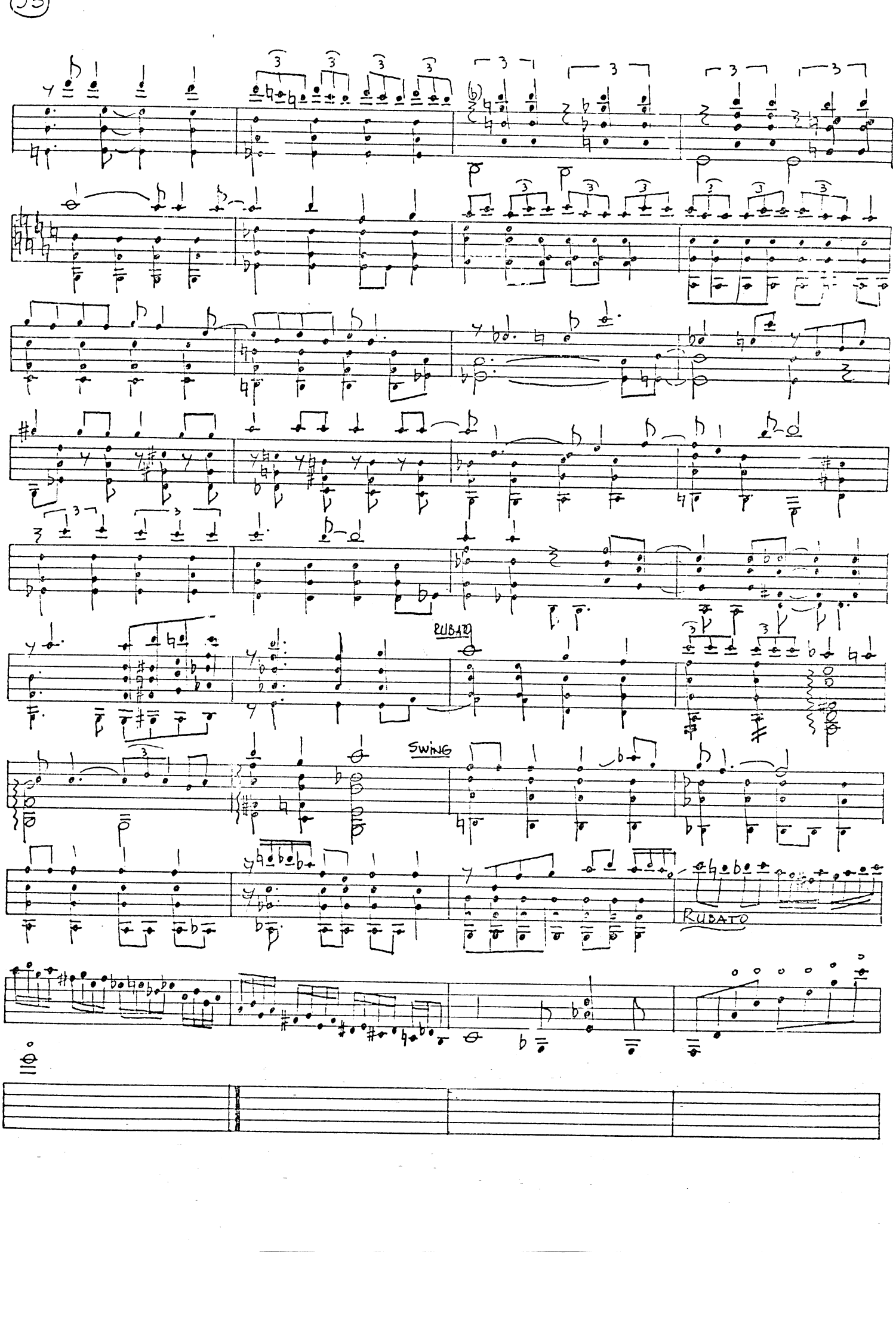

D7
G
Am7
D7
G
Am7b5
D7
G
Am7b5
D7b9
GΔ7
B-7
BΔ7
EΔ7
BΔ7
Sempre
A-7
D7
GΔ7
Am7
Rubato E7
Am7b5
D7
Am7
D7b9
E7
Am7
D7
Bm7b5
E7#5
Am7
C
D



SLOW
RUBATO

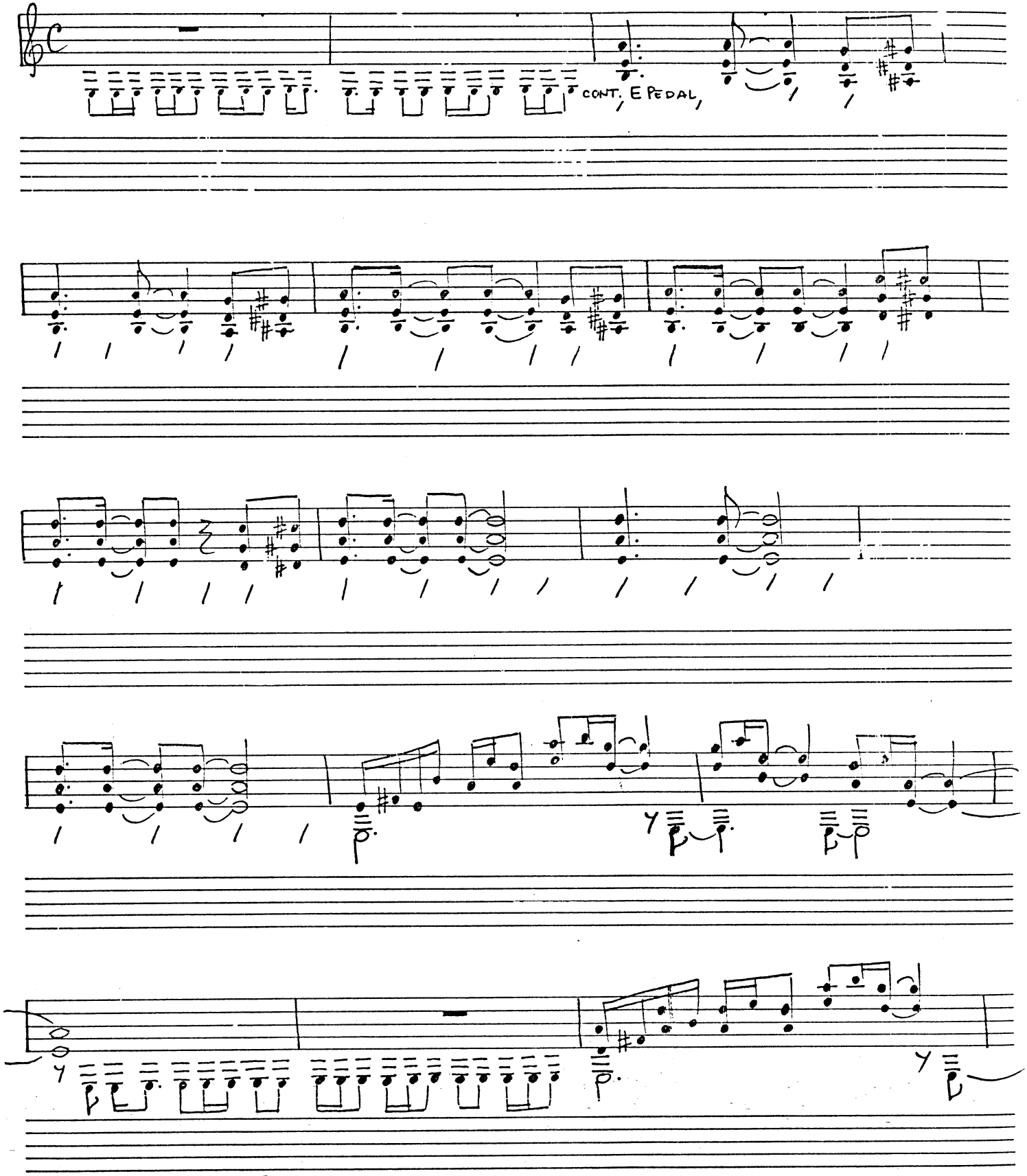
MED. SWING

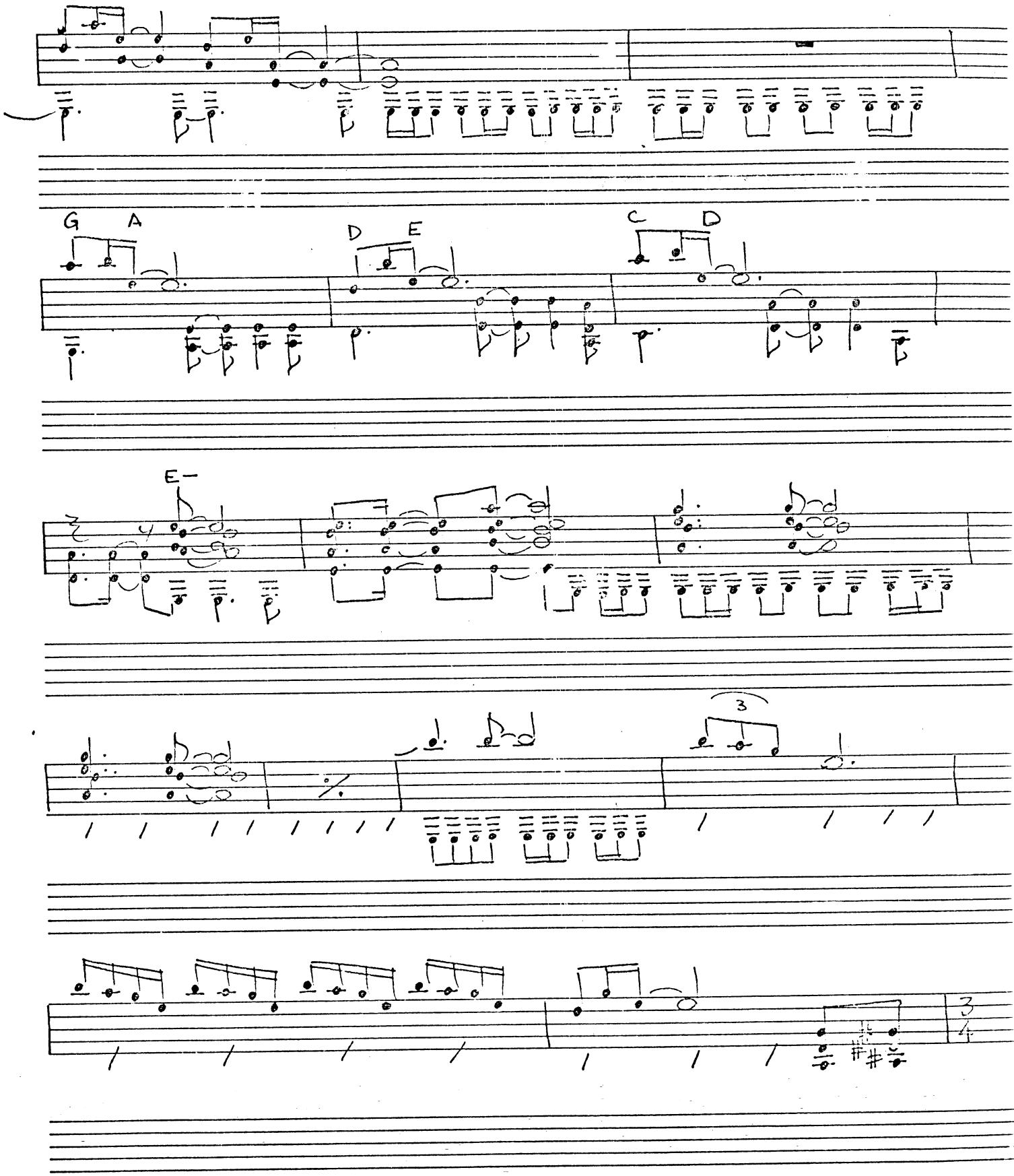


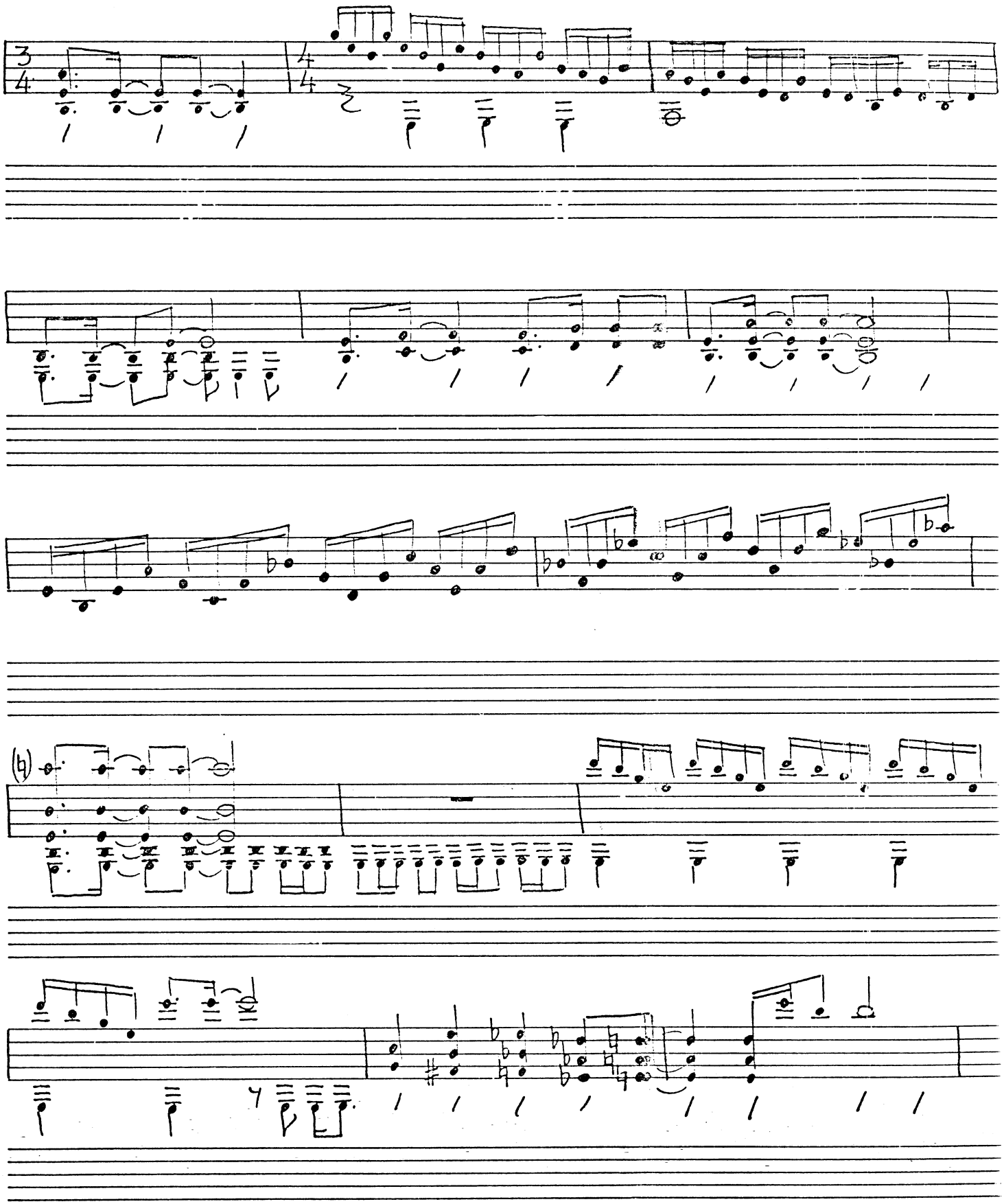

53
RUBATO
SWING
RUBATO

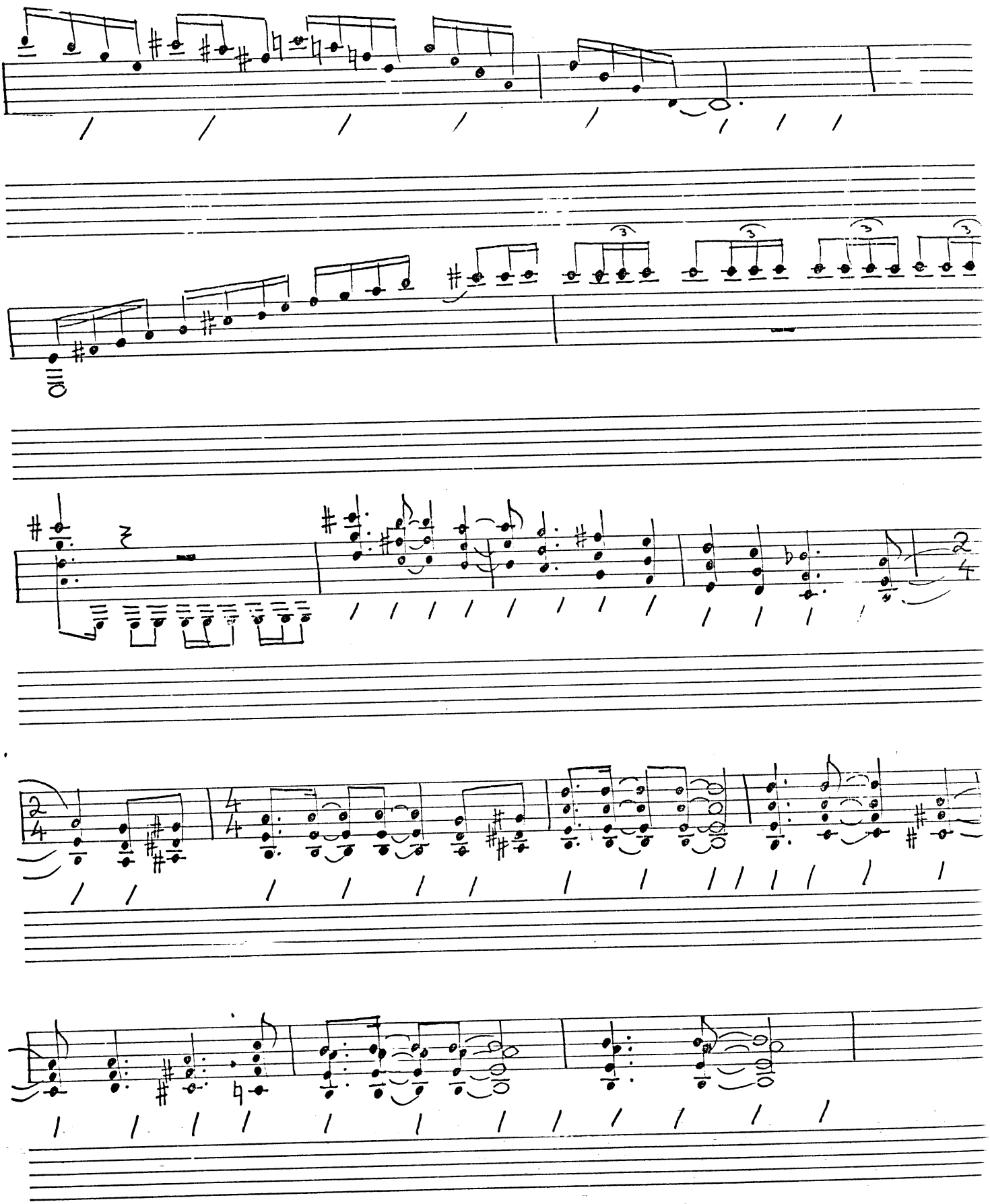
TRACK VIII

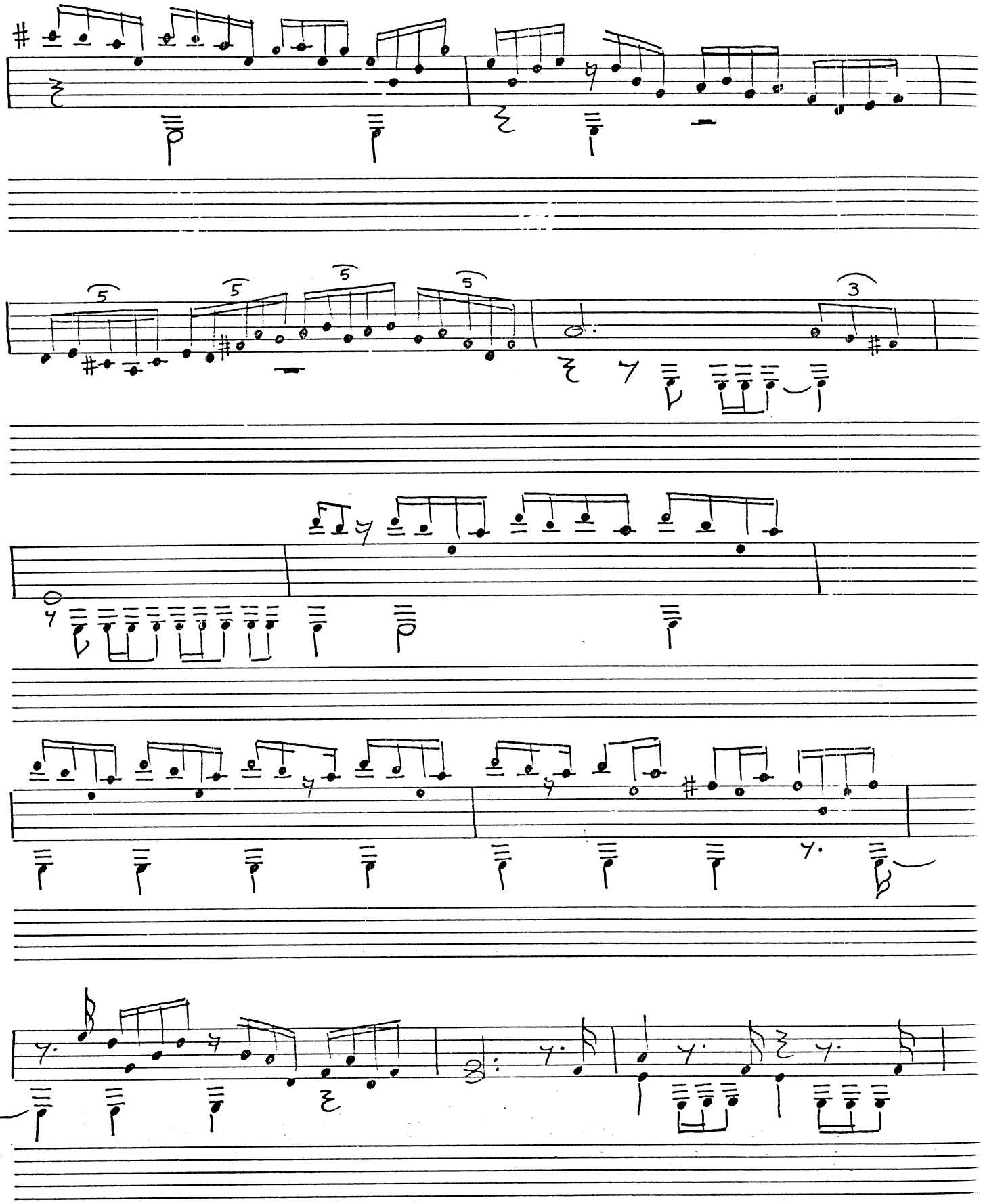
E-MODAL (MOSTLY DORIAN)

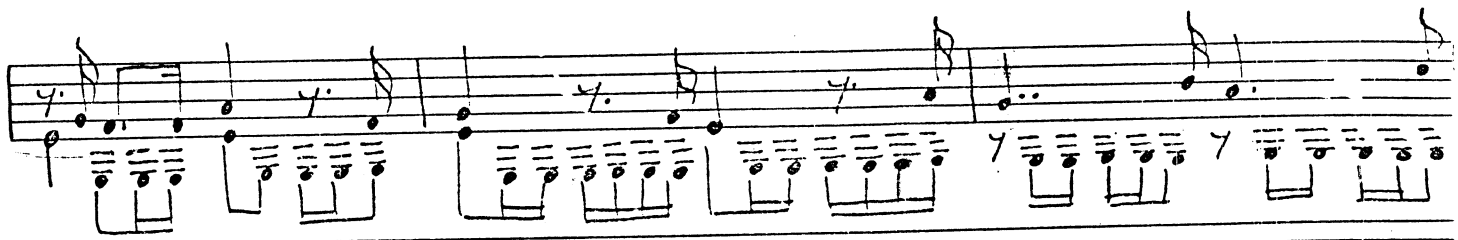


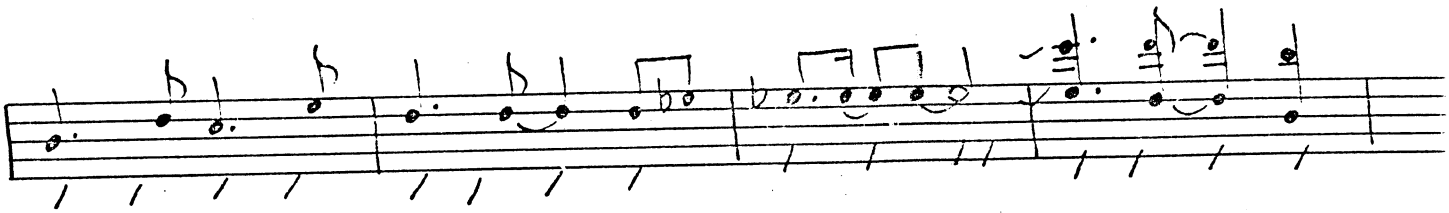

G A
D E
C D
E-
3
3/4

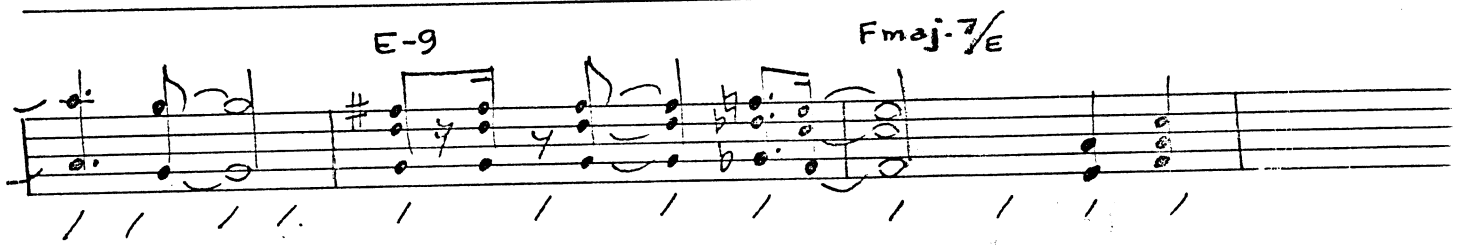


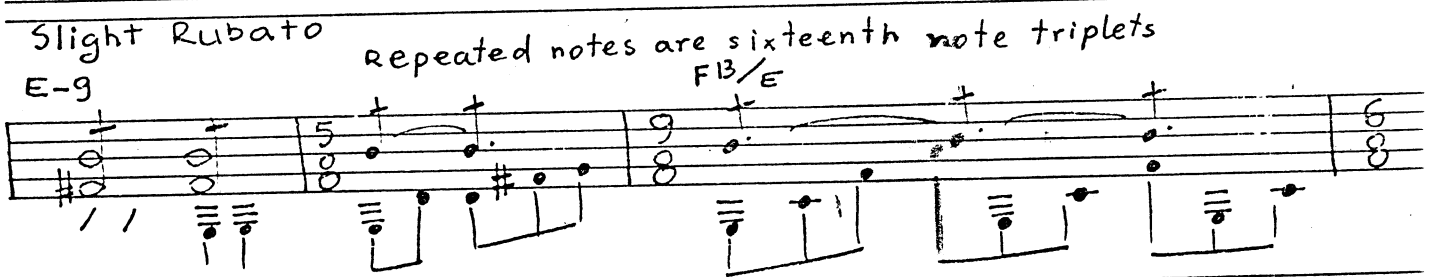


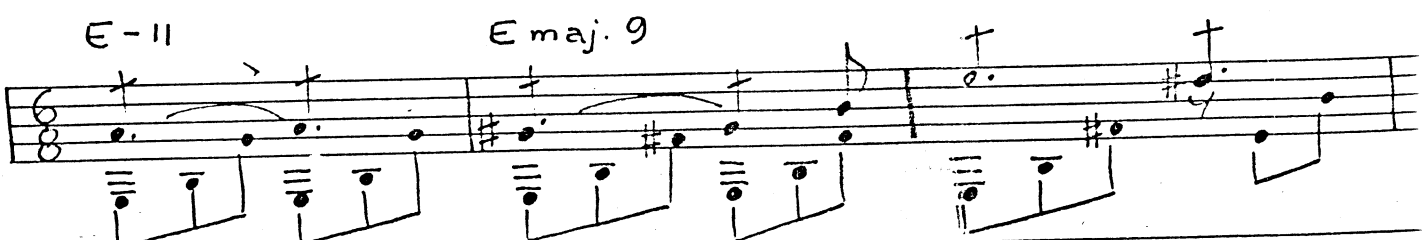


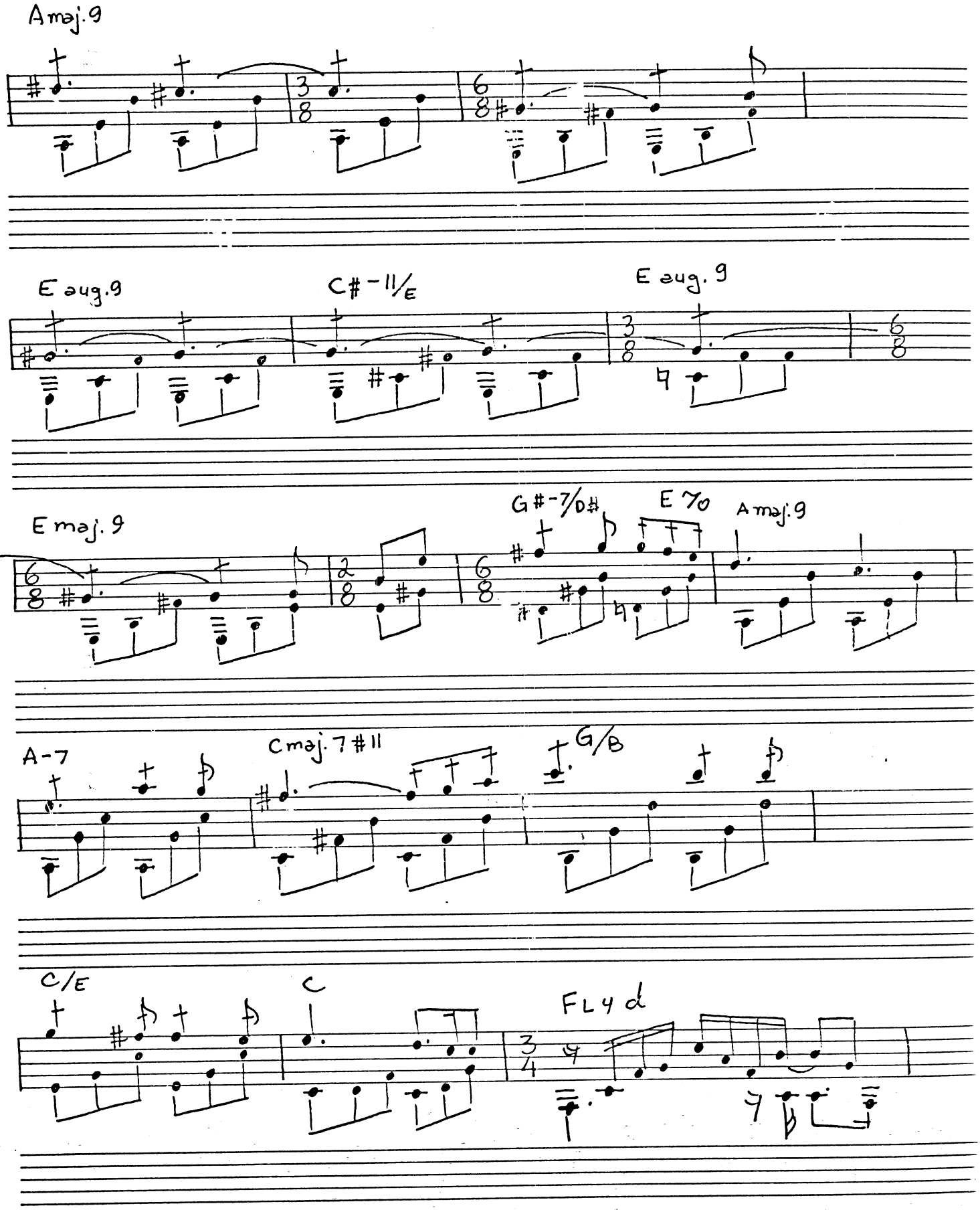




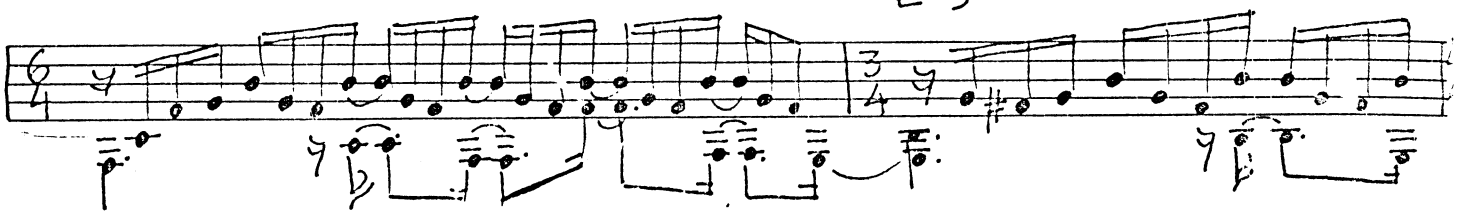

E-9
Fmaj.7/E


Slight Rubato
Repeated notes are sixteenth note triplets
E-9
F13/E

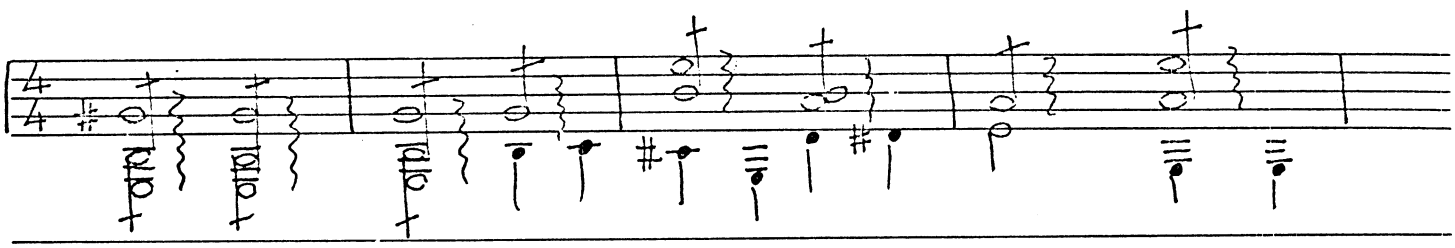

E-11
Emaj.9



E-9

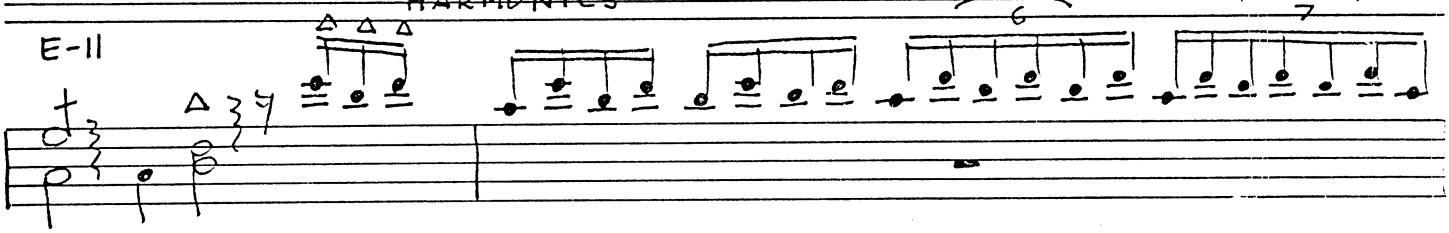


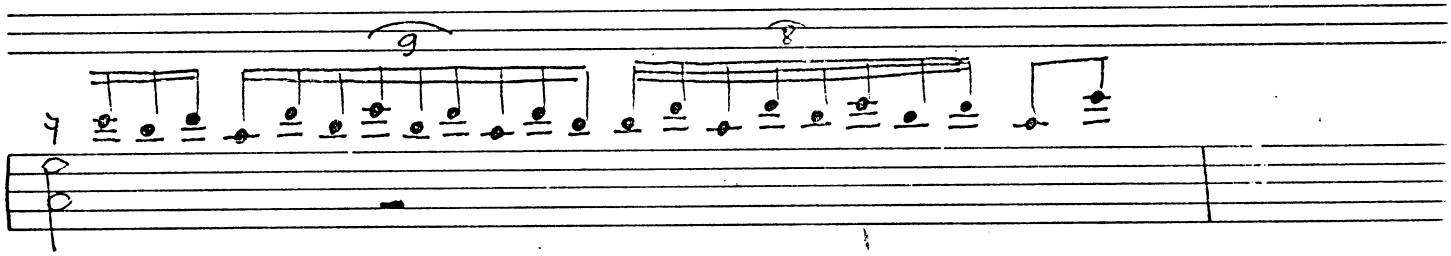
Very RUBATO



HARMONICS

E-11

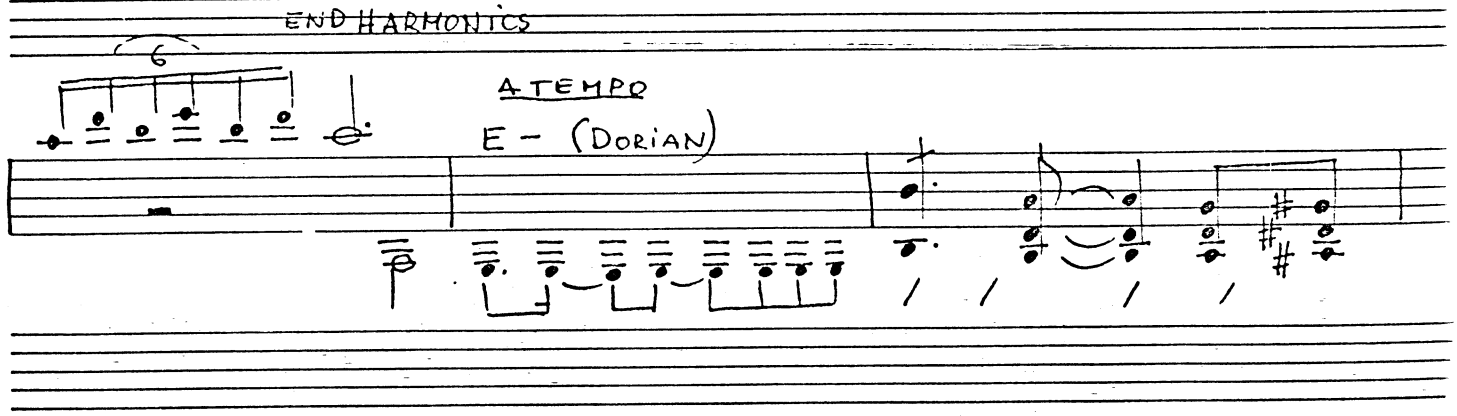


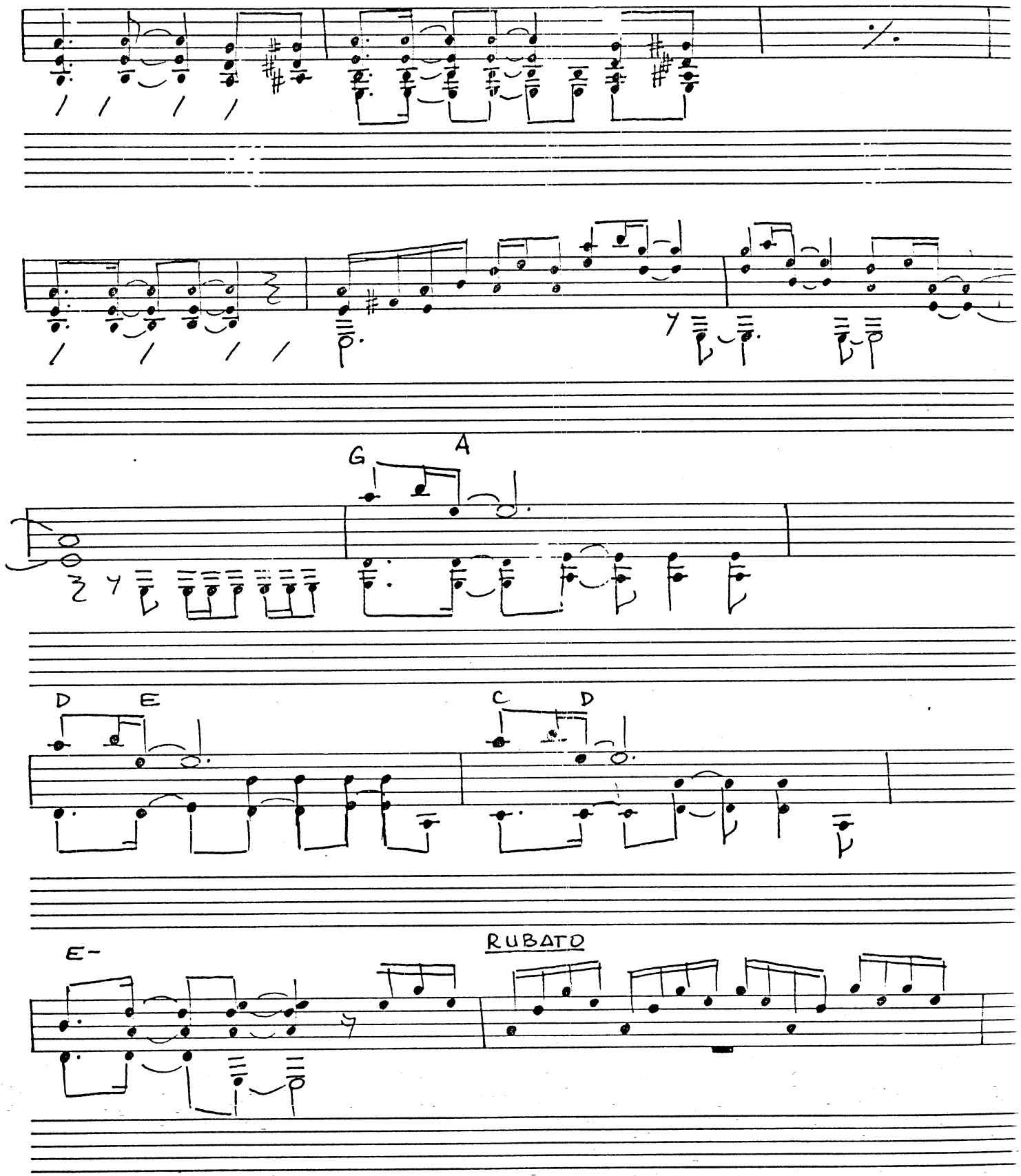


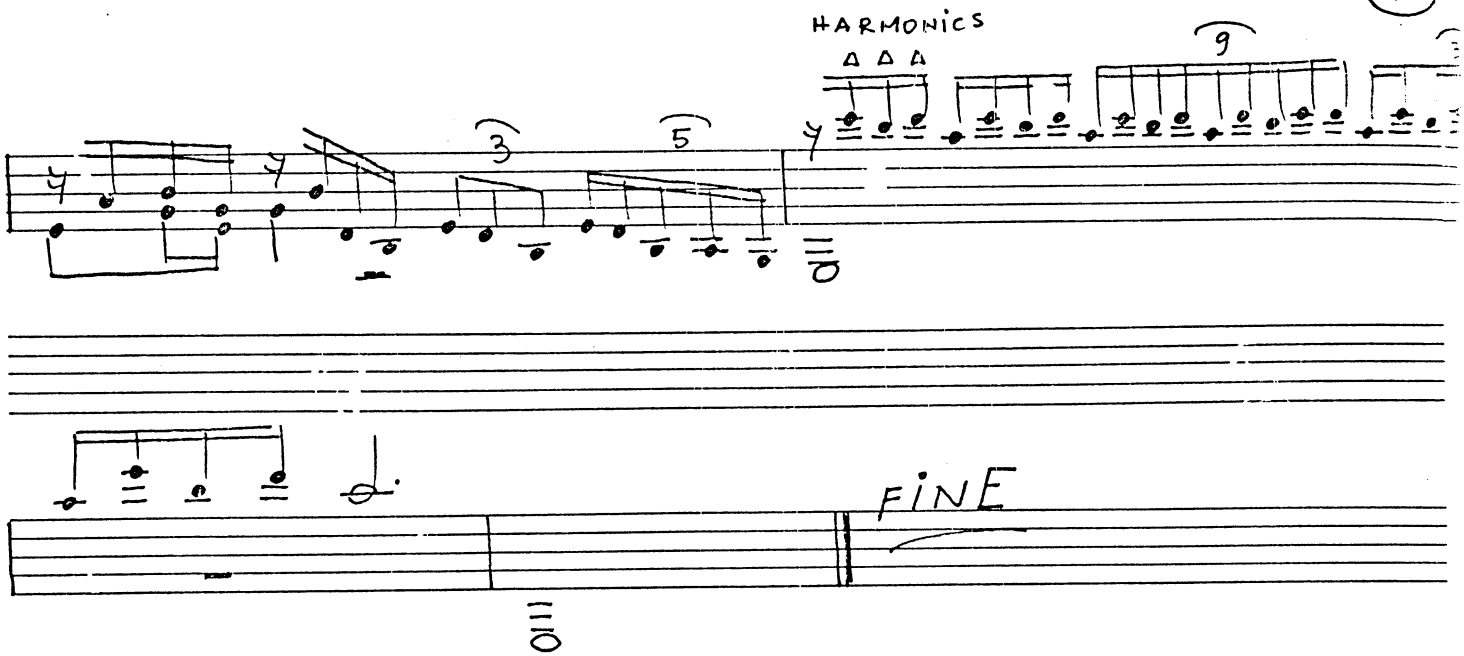
END HARMONICS

ATEMPO

E- (DORIAN)




G
A
D
E
C
D
E-
RUBATO


HARMONICS
FINE

Harp Harmonics

I. Guitarists associated with harp harmonics

a. Chet Atkins
b. Lenny Breau
c. Ted Greene
d. Lorne Lofsky
e. Russell Malone

II. Basic technique and patterns

a. Thumb and 1st finger
b. Adding the 4th finger (or 3rd)
    i. Open string cascade pattern.
        1. Ascending: Note, Harmonic, Note, Harmonic…
        2. Descending: Harmonic, Note, Harmonic, Note….
    ii. Open string double stop pattern.

III. Applications

a. Chord voicings
    i. Works on voicings with no repeated notes at the octave, as they will be repeated pitches when raised an octave by harmonics.
    ii. Combine voicings into ii-V-I progressions.
    iii. Knowing multiple uses for a voicing (i.e. tritone subs) is very helpful.
    iv. Practice balancing volume of harmonic and notes.
b. Two-note lines
c. Cluster chords
    i. Raises lowest note of drop 2 voicing an octave by harmonic.
    ii. Lenny Breau used this to achieve Bill Evans type voicings.
d. Scales using harmonics
    i. Lenny Breau technique using hammer ons and pull offs
    ii. C major scale using both harmonics and fretted notes.
e. Sweeping harmonics
    i. Lorne Lofsky technique
    ii. The claw

IV. Further resources

a. **Youtube**: "Lenny Breau…Ted Greene… Lorne Lofsky…. etc… harmonics"
b. **Books**: Mel Bay: Lenny Breau Fingerstyle Jazz
c. **Articles**: "Lenny Breau's Harp Harmonics," Guitar Player Magazine, July 1994
d. **Videos**: "Harmonics" with Lorne Lofsky on Mike's Master Classes
e. www.lennybreau.com
f. www.tedgreene.com

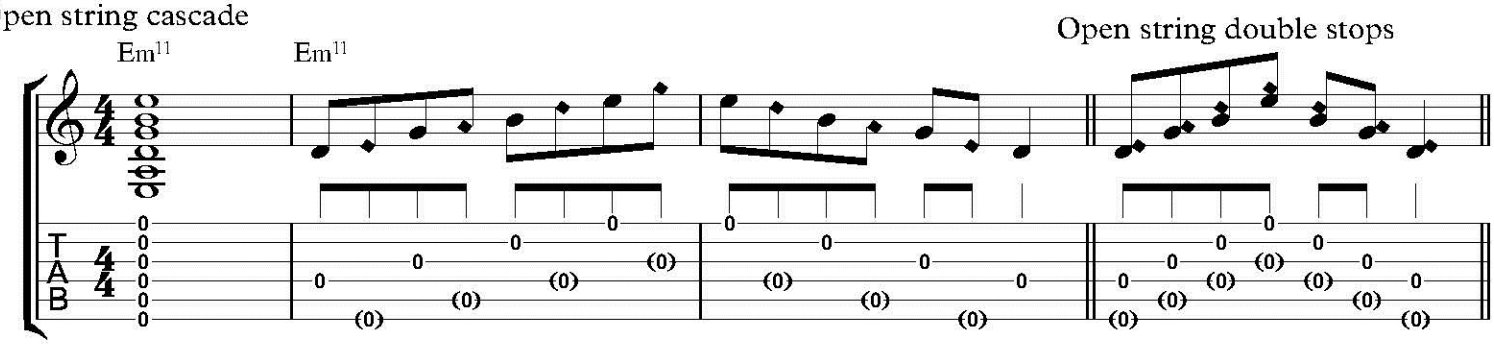
Harp Harmonics Lesson

Neil Ferris

Open string cascade

Em11 Em11

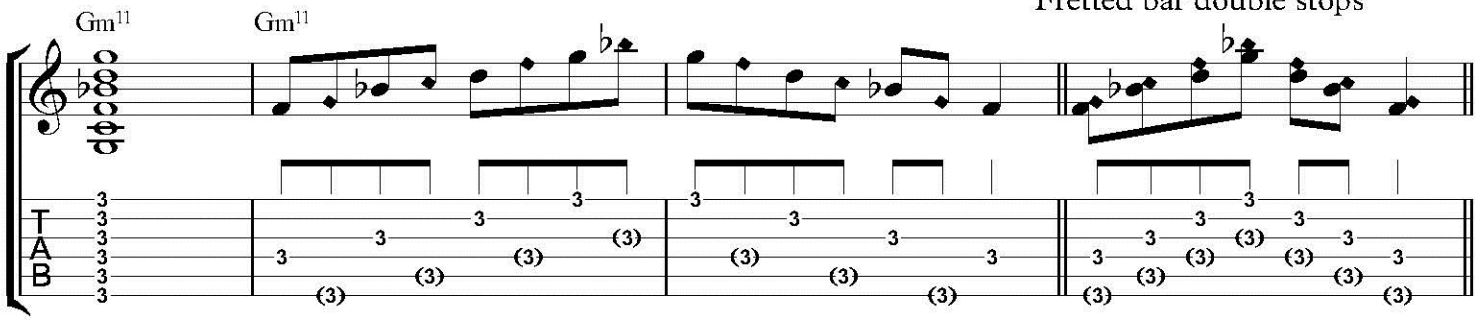
Open string double stops



Fretted bar cascade

Gm11 Gm11

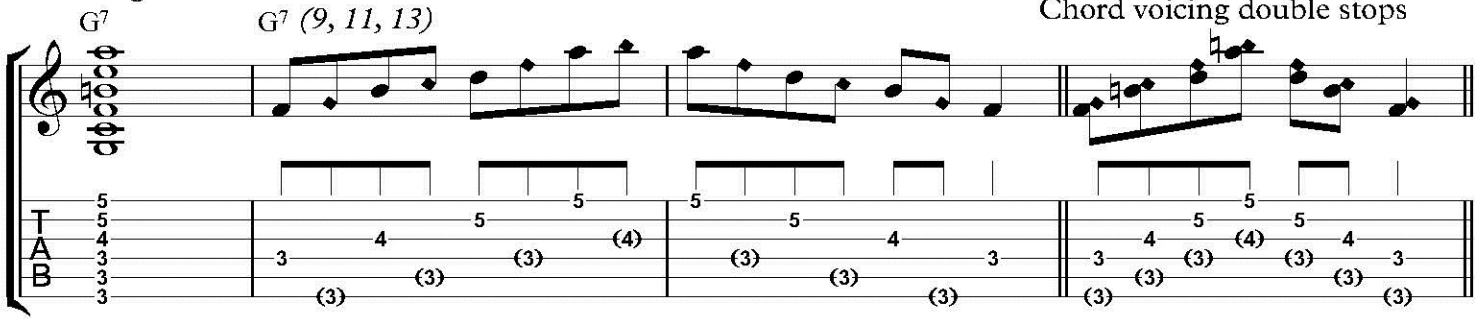
Fretted bar double stops



Chord voicing cascade

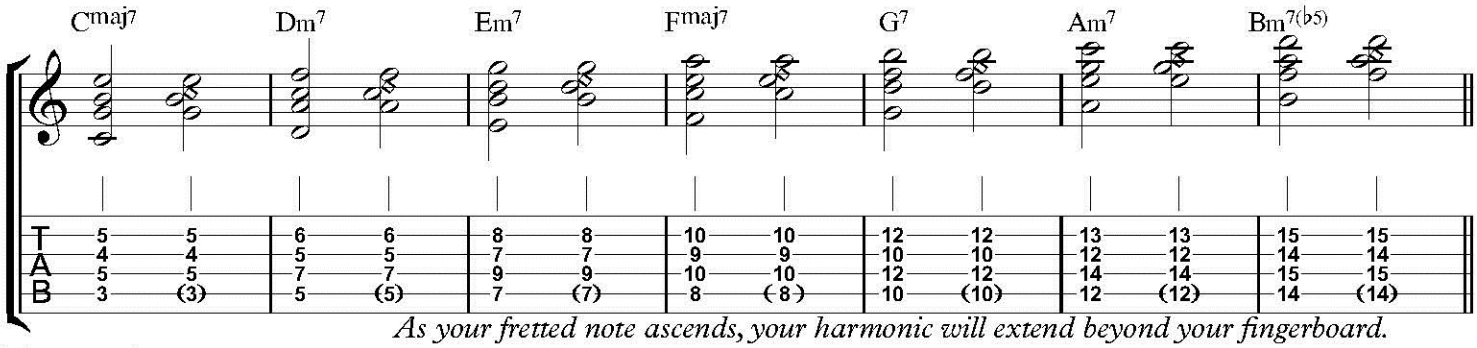
G7 G7 *(9, 11, 13)*

Chord voicing double stops



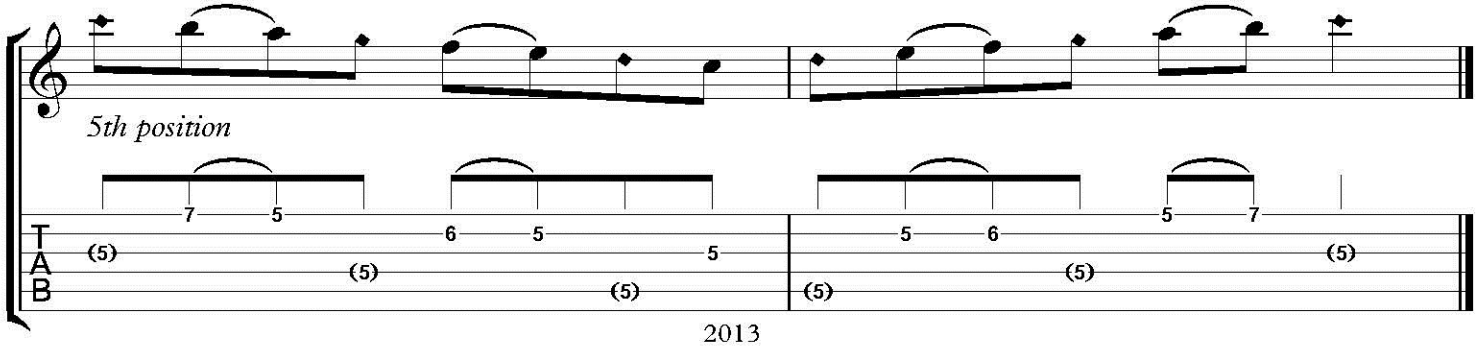
Cluster voicings

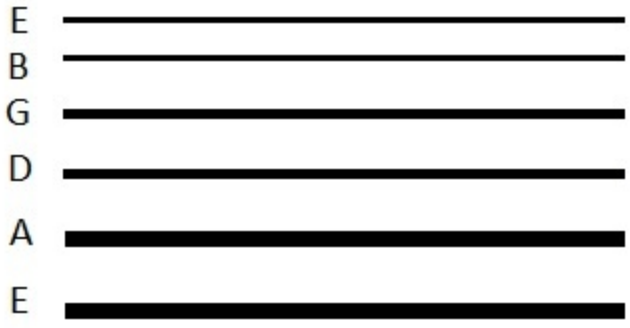
Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7 G7 Am7 Bm7(b5)



As your fretted note ascends, your harmonic will extend beyond your fingerboard.
Use "landmarks" as guides, and switch over to the bridge pickup to get more harmonic tone.

Scale harmonics





Note

...etc

Note

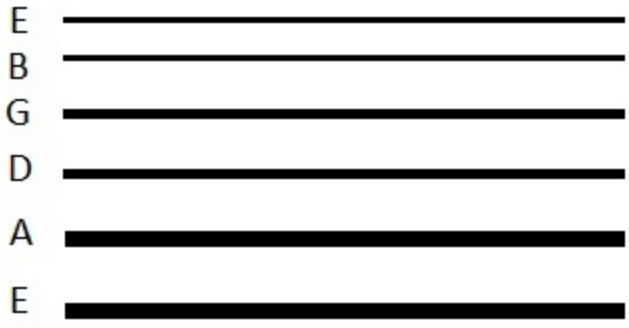
Harmonic

Note

Harmonic

Harmonic

ASCENDING



Note

Note

Harmonic

Note

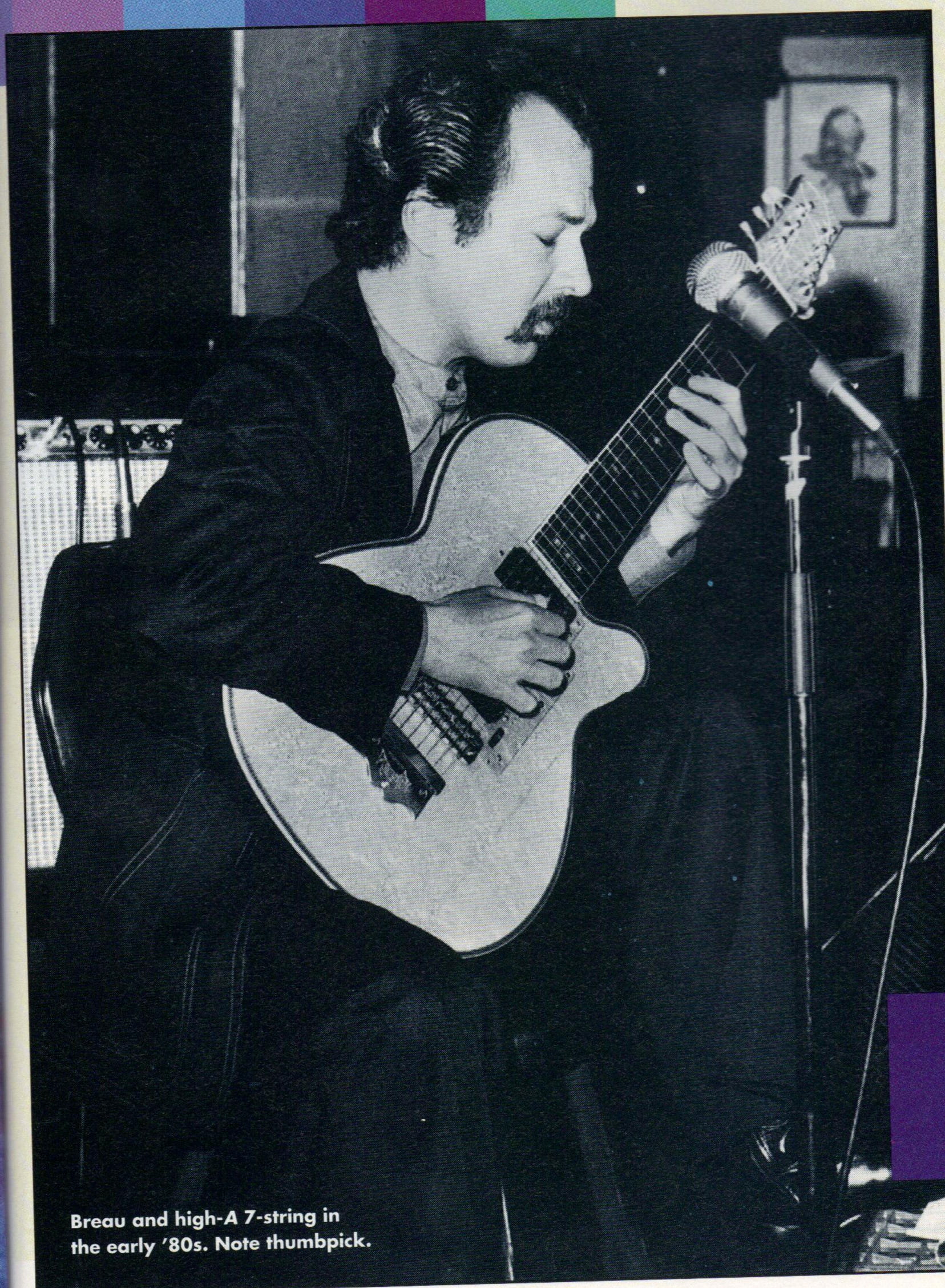
Harmonic

...etc

DESCENDING

A Lost Lenny Breau Lesson

Harp Harmonics and Heavenly Harmonies



Breau and high-A 7-string in the early '80s. Note thumbpick.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF BREAU'S DAUGHTER, EMILY HUGHES

Each generation yields a handful of guitarists who never achieve widespread public acclaim, but who are held in awe by peers, industry insiders, and knowledgeable fans. Guitar students of all ages and skill levels make the pilgrimage to smoky bars and cramped apartments to absorb 6-string lore from these shadowy figures. Swapping stories and tapes, students develop an informal, underground school

BY ANDY ELLIS

A Lost Lenny Breau Lesson

based on the ideas and techniques of such reclusive guitar gurus. High on the list of legendary, low-profile jazz-guitar savants are Ted Greene, Mick Goodrick, and the late Lenny Breau.

Lenny lived and played in relative obscurity. His bohemian and often self-destructive lifestyle prevented him from having a career commensurate with his abilities. Questions still surround his untimely death at age 43. Most who heard Breau perform felt his prodigious talent was never adequately captured on a smattering of commercial releases. His ideas, however, continue to be embraced and developed by others, and in that sense, his music and legacy live on. Listen to Steve Masakowski and Philip deGruy to hear two contemporary players who acknowledge their debt to Breau and his 7-string.

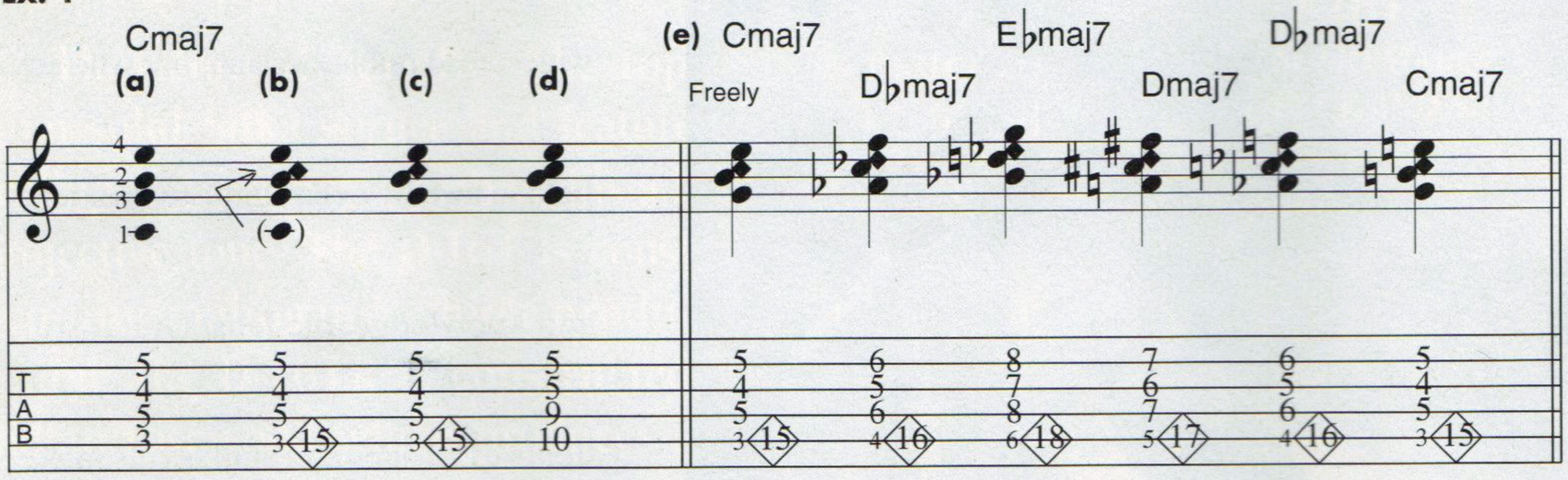
On December 13, 1982, I took a private lesson from Lenny in his Nashville apartment. The following material is extracted from my 90-minute tape of the event. It explores how Breau used harmonics to convert standard guitar chords into piano-like clusters and how he handled quartal voicings. (We'll investigate Breau's intriguing single-note concepts in future Sessions lessons.)

Lenny possessed the rare ability to reduce complex techniques and theories to their essence. He was as gifted a teacher as he was a performer.

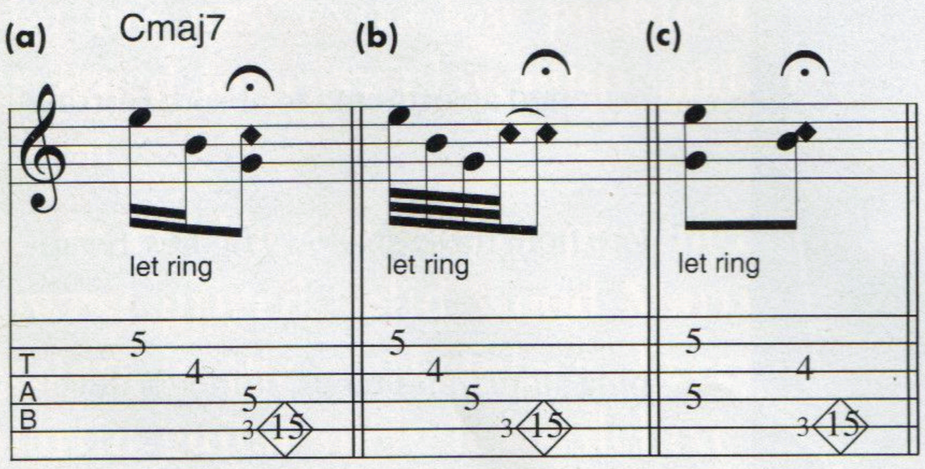
Harmonic harmony. A fingerstyle player, Lenny was the undisputed harmonics champ. In addition to rippling harp-harmonic arpeggios—a technique he documented in his early-'80s *GP* columns—Breau was fond of revoicing chords by playing one of the lower notes as an octave harmonic. "Take *Cmaj7*, for example," he explained. "I lift *C*, the root, up an octave so it's a half-step higher than the 7. It becomes more of a cluster. If you don't use harmonics, clusters can be difficult to fret, especially when you're moving around the fretboard."

First play the *Cmaj7* in **Ex. 1a**, picking with your thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers. Next, using your picking-hand index finger, lightly touch the fifth string over the 15th fret. Pluck the note with your pick-

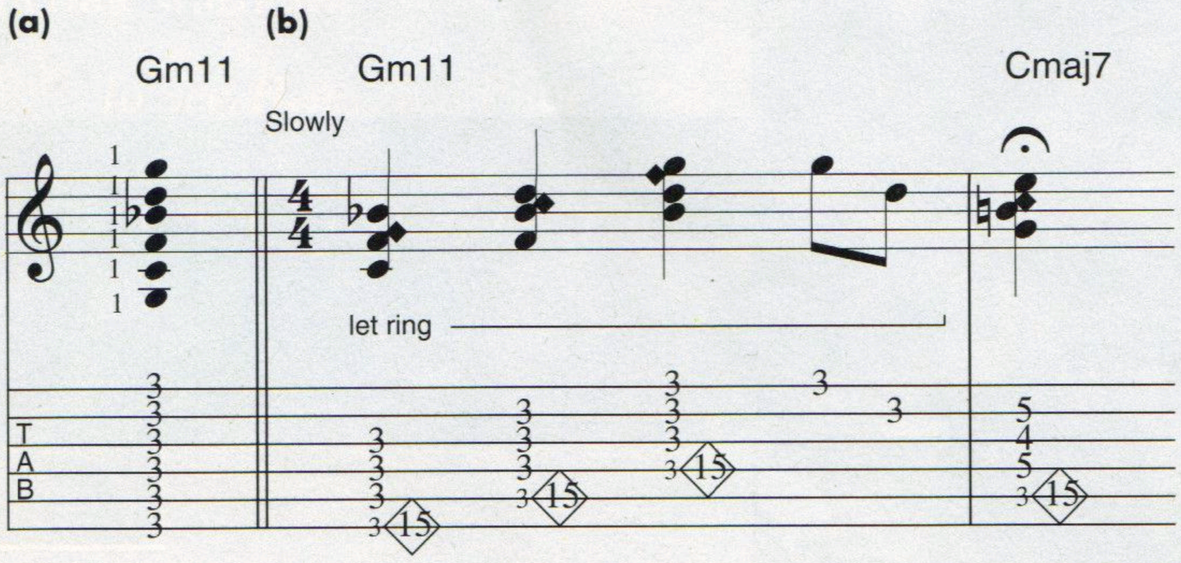
Ex. 1



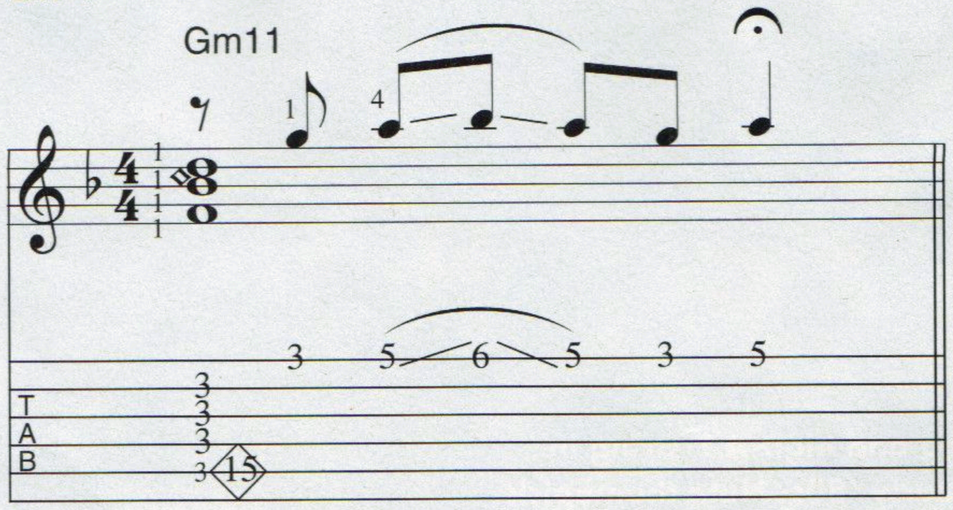
Ex. 2



Ex. 3



Ex. 4



A young Lenny explores left-hand finger independence on the bandstand.

hand thumb. This yields a *C* harmonic 12 frets—one octave—higher than the original 3rd-fret *C* (**Ex. 1b**) and produces a close, piano-like voicing (**Ex. 1c**). Since two fingers are required to sound the harmonic, you'll need to use your pinky to pick the highest note.

Ex. 1d illustrates the stretch this major-7th chord would require if you didn't use a harmonic. While Breau's harmonic revoicing technique places less demand on the fretting hand, it requires more effort from your picking hand. To develop quick and accurate "point-and-pluck" harmonics and strengthen your picking pinky, practice transposing the new voicing as in **Ex. 1e**.

Breau advised, "You have to be careful not to pick the fretted strings too hard, or they'll cover up the harmonic. I like when the harmonic comes in a split second after the rest of the chord. It stands out a bit. It's a way to balance things."

Here are three picking patterns Breau used to let harmonics breathe. In **Ex. 2a**, the root—now an octave harmonic—follows on the heels of the fretted 7, creating a ringing minor-second *melodic* interval. Remember to use your pinky to pluck the highest note. **Ex. 2b** is a quick backward arpeggio that ends with the harmonic. In **Ex. 2c**, play the minor second as a stand-alone *harmonic* interval. Work on each of these techniques while moving the major-7th cluster up and down the fretboard.

Breau liked lacing minor 11th chords with harmonics. "To get a *Gm11*," he said, "barre straight across the neck at the 3rd fret [**Ex. 3a**]. The 11 is *C*. I'll play the *G* harmonic on the sixth string with the next three notes—*C, F, B♭*. Then I'll repeat that on the next-higher string group. You just go four, four, and four [**Ex. 3b**]. It's amazing all the different sounds you can get using this technique, things you could never reach. Like, it's tough to fret *Gm11* and get the *C* and *B♭* together. By going with the harmonic, you're playing a voicing that's not a guitar chord." Play Ex. 3b slowly. For maximum sustain, don't relax your index barre as you work across the strings.

"Not only do you get clusters from this minor 11," Lenny pointed out, "it gives you the freedom to play a line on top [**Ex. 4**]. Whenever you have a free finger, experiment by adding melody over a sustained cluster. There's a whole world in that technique alone." To strengthen your fret-hand pinky and develop independence, move Ex. 4 up and down the neck in minor thirds—*B♭m, Dm, Fm*, etc.

A Lost Lenny Breau Lesson

"I'm always looking for unusual voicings," Lenny said. "For instance, I'll play an *Em11* like this (**Ex. 5a**) and arpeggiate it with moving harmonics (**Ex. 5b**). There's a *D* triad on top—isn't that a hip voicing? Let the intervals ring against each other. They sound like little chords in themselves. I got into this by listening to piano players, particularly Bill Evans."

Open strings. Lenny often used open strings to color his chords, as in **Ex. 6**. Memorize each bar's chord form, and then add harmonics for a real treat.

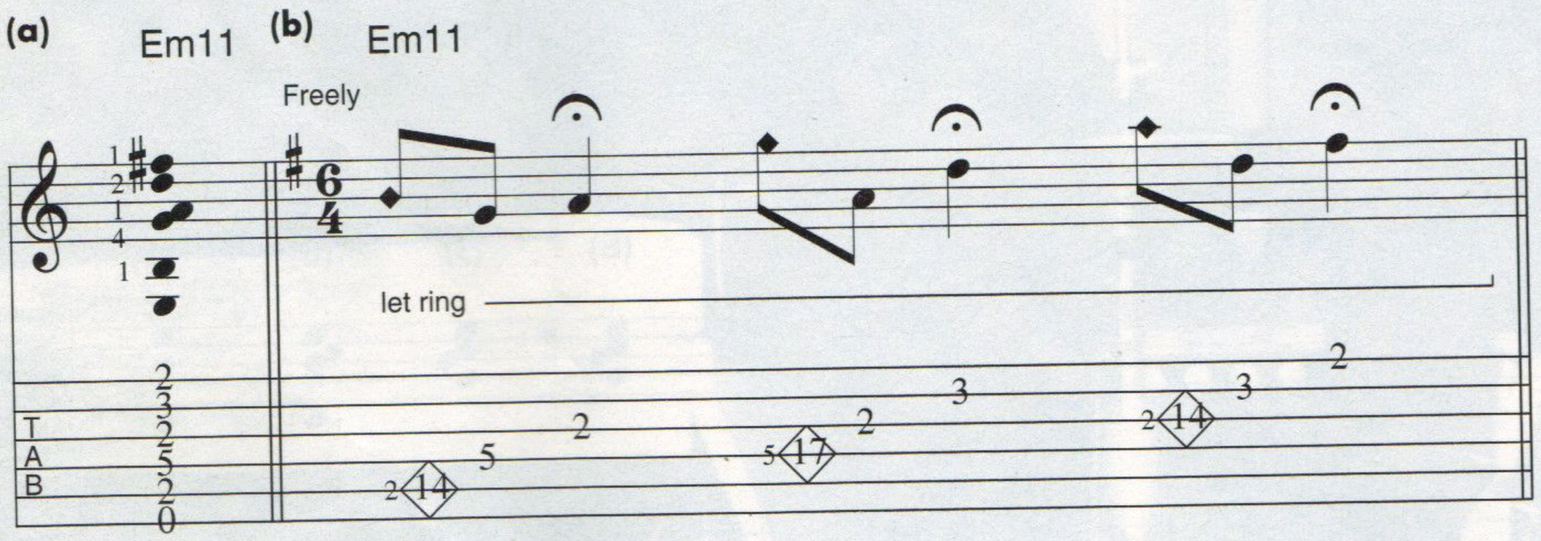
Certain open-string voicings automatically produce ascending *and* descending intervals as you strum sequentially across the strings. Breau would take advantage of this phenomenon, as in **Ex. 7**'s *Am9*. Notice how in beat two the minor second descends, even though you're moving from low to high strings.

Conversely, Breau would often stagger his arpeggio to create jagged melodies and interval jumps. In **Ex. 8**, for instance, he skips from the fifth to the second string, leaping a major ninth. He follows this with a minor second—the smallest possible interval. Mixing open strings with harmonics, as in this example, offers a mind-boggling array of voicing possibilities and a lifetime of study. Asked if he developed his harmonic approach scientifically or if it simply evolved from late-night treasure hunts, Breau replied, "Like hunting. I didn't write chords down or make any notes. I just keep it in my head."

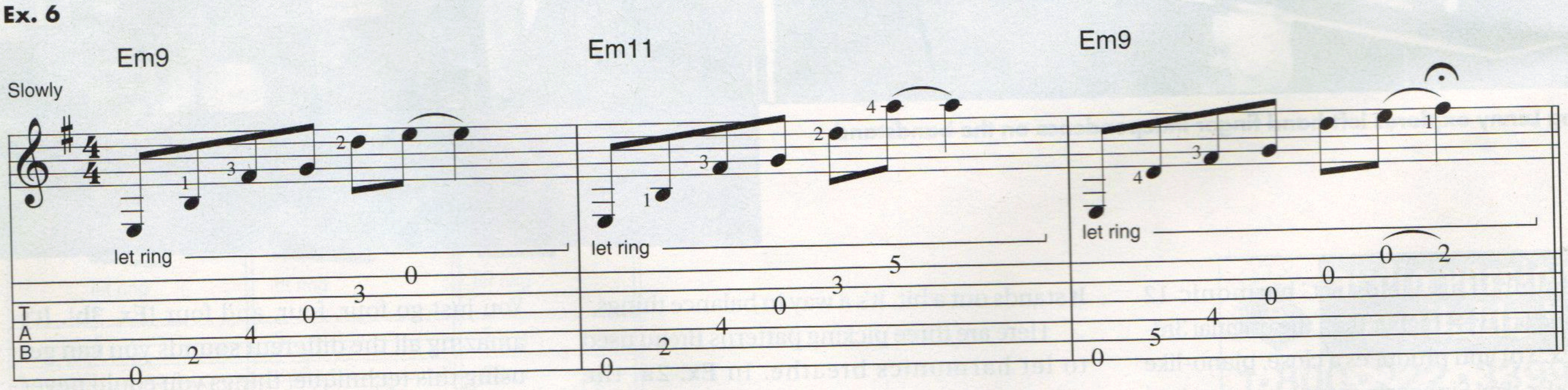
Ex. 9 shows how Breau would combine a *G* major pentatonic scale (bar 1) with an *Em9*

Cool threads, cool Strat: In his teens, country picker Breau toured and performed as Lone Pine, Jr.

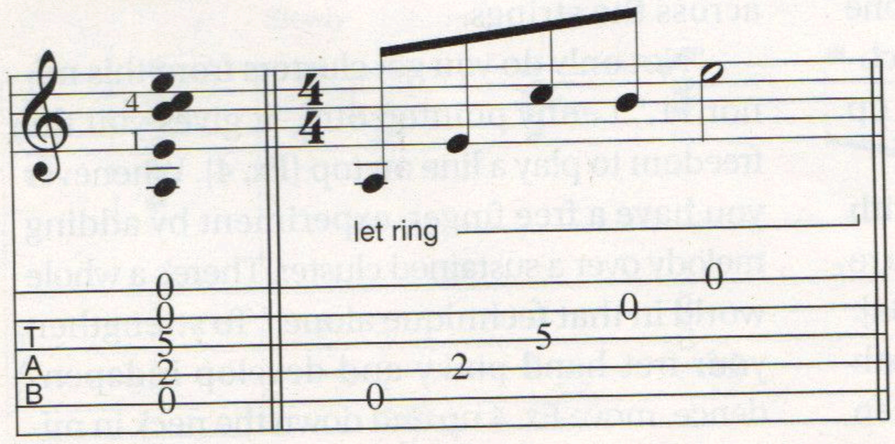
Ex. 5



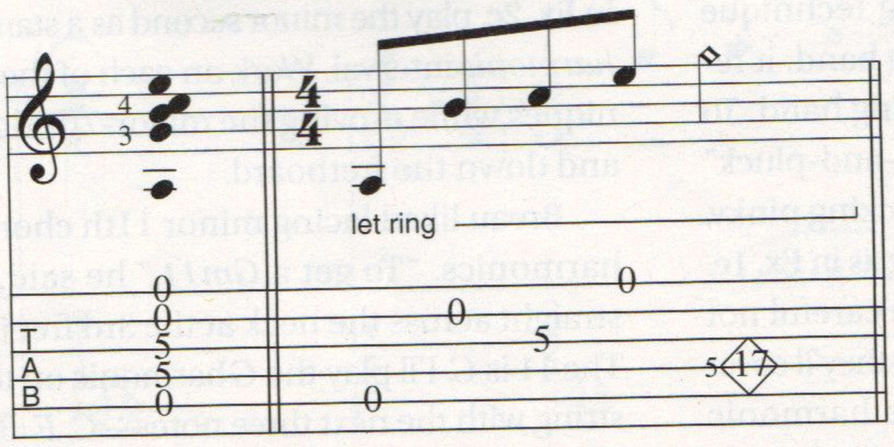
Ex. 6



Ex. 7



Ex. 8

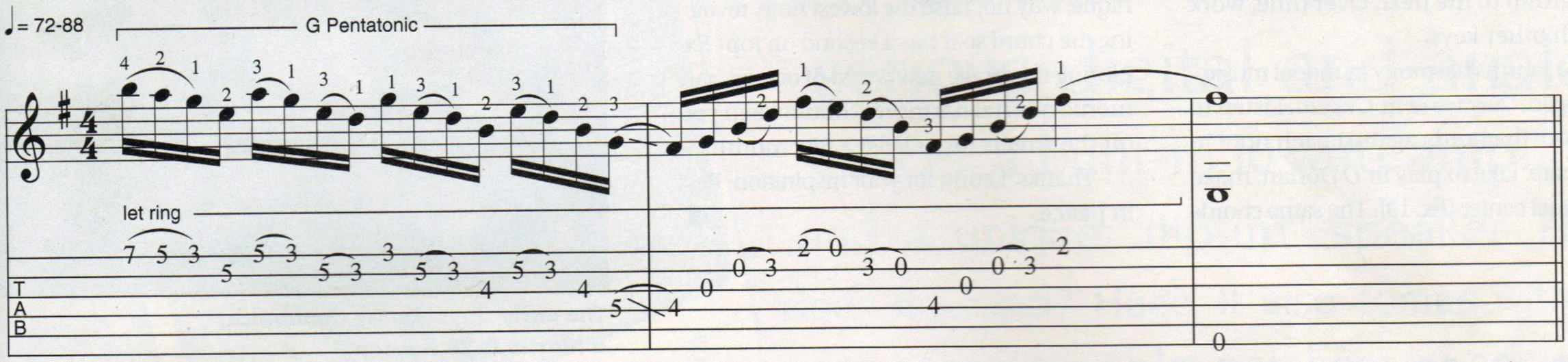


arpeggio (bar 2) to jam over an *Em*. Lenny suggested, "Instead of just running the pentatonic scale, use a pattern like this to make it sound good. Play slowly and listen to each note. Hear the effect each scale tone has against the chord. Ravi Shankar talks about the importance of one note. Know you're playing the 9. Play a nice *long* 9." Watch the slurs in this lick; strategically placed hammers and pulls provide momentum and interest.

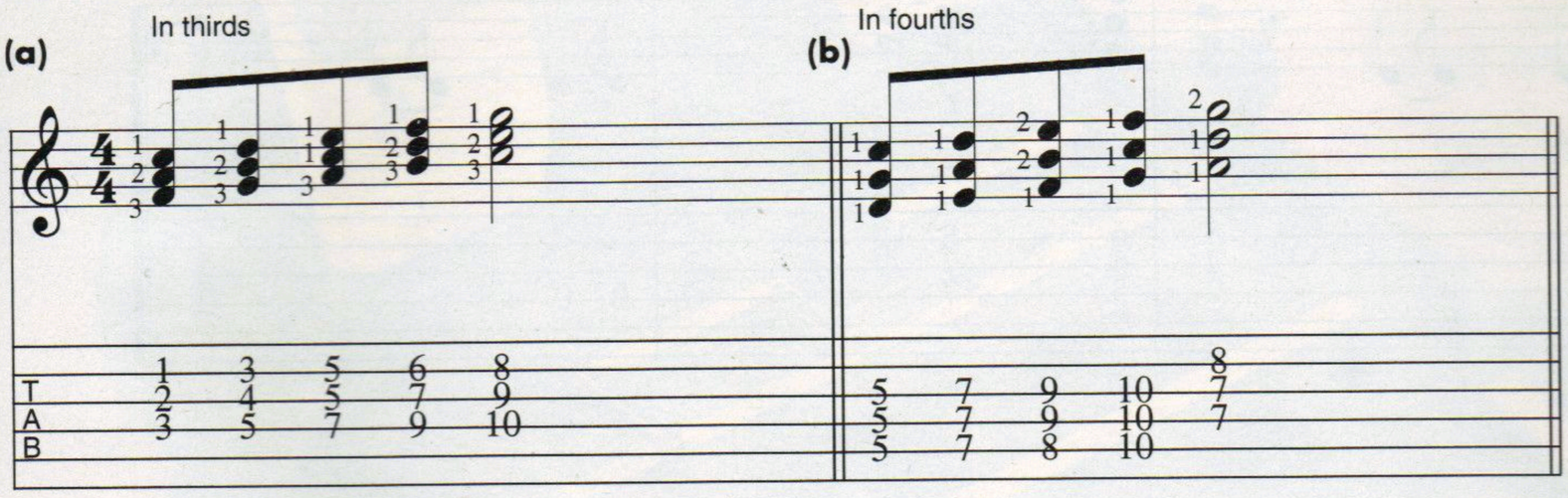
"In jazz," Lenny continued, "you often hear pentatonics played against chords voiced in fourths. For example, instead of harmonizing a *C* scale in thirds [**Ex. 10a**], harmonize it in fourths [**Ex. 10b**]. You're playing the *C* scale along each string, but a fourth apart. McCoy Tyner plays chords like these with his left hand and solos against them with his right. That's what makes the sound. Sometimes he'd arpeggiate these chords to create lines. If you're blowing over *Em*, play this to sound outside [**Ex. 11**]."

Ex. 12 demonstrates the kind of quartal (fourth-based) chords Breau would use for *G7* or *G13*. Chord tones abound, but in a harmonically ambiguous context. Without thirds, there's no major or minor tonality. This abstract setting lets you play non-diatonic clusters a half-step away from diatonic ones, as at the start of bar 4. "You can get away with it," Breau urged. "Fool around with half-step approaches to create tension."

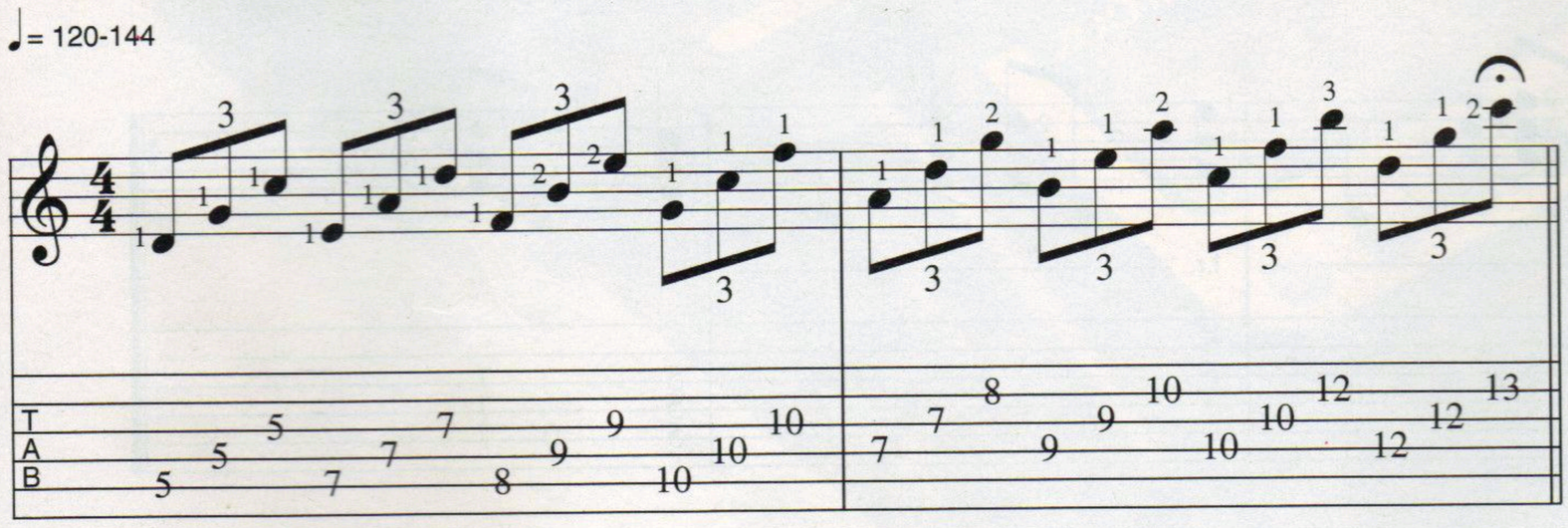
Ex. 9

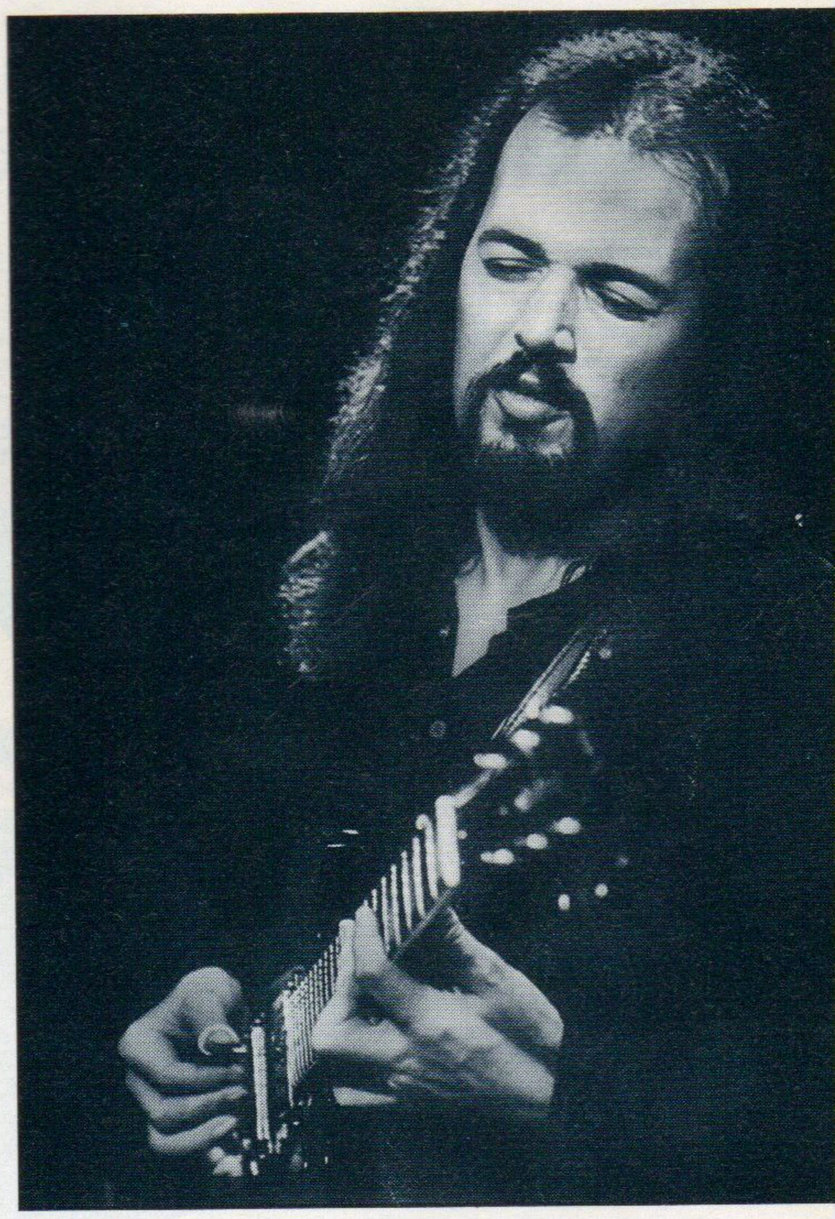


Ex. 10



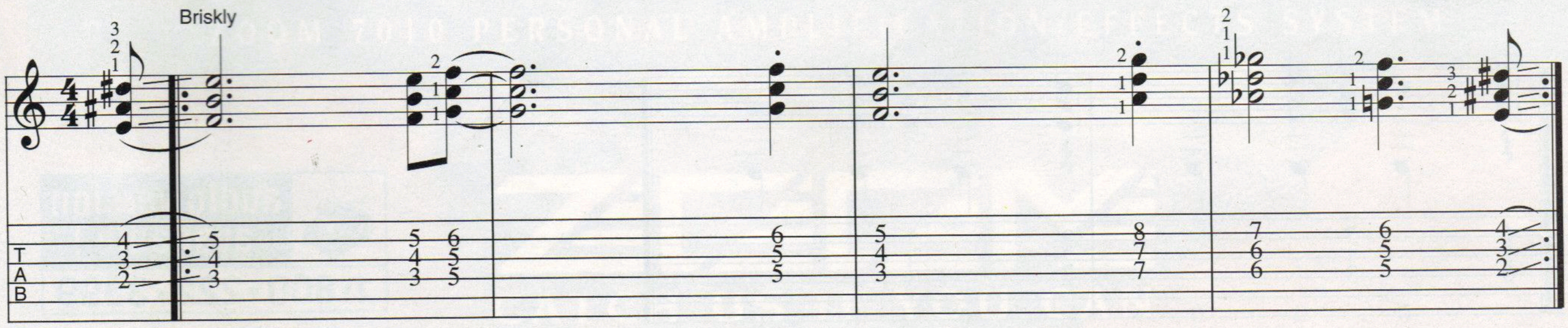
Ex. 11





Looking within: Breau lays down world-wise fingerstyle jazz.

Ex. 12 (G7)



A Lost Lenny Breau Lesson

To become versed in quartal harmony, pick a key—say, *C*—and build chords in fourths from each scale tone (*C-F-B♭, D-G-C, E-A-D*, etc.). Work these chords out on the three highest three-string groups, i.e., 3-2-1, 4-3-2, 5-4-3. Listen for timbral differences when you play the same voicings on different string groups. Also notice how a voicing's shape changes from one string group to the next. Over time, work through other keys.

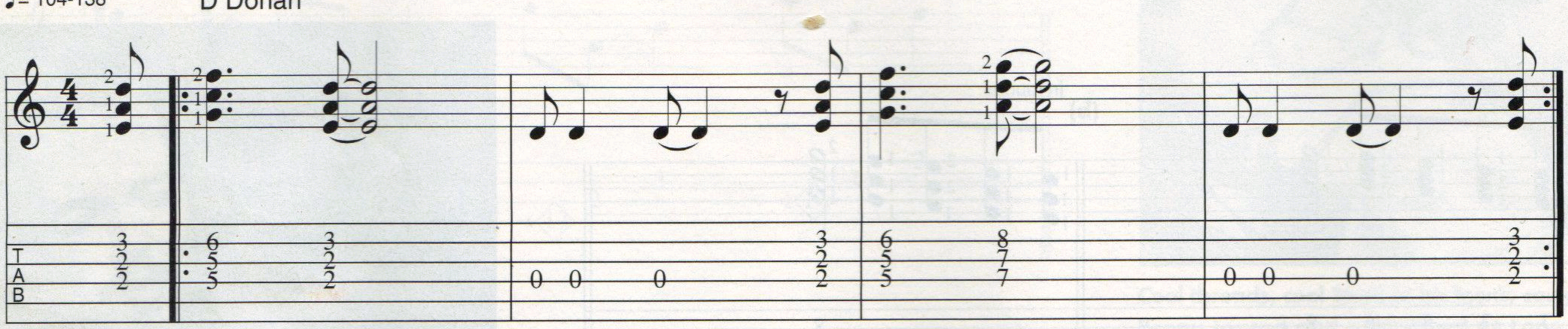
"Use fourths harmony in modal music," Lenny said. "Say we're in *C* again. Listen to those fourth chords against each note in the *C* scale. Like to play in *D* Dorian, make *D* the tonal center [**Ex. 13**]. The same chords played against *A* put you in *A* Aeolian [**Ex. 14**]. It really starts sounding like Trane [John Coltrane] when you get into the *E* Phrygian mode. Try superimposing a *G* pentatonic pattern [as in Ex. 9] over this two-bar progression [**Ex. 15**]."

New turf. In three-note quartal chords, the top and bottom tones are a seventh apart. Using Breau's octave-harmonic technique, why not raise the lowest note, revoicing the chord so it has a second on top? Exploring this brave new world of octave-harmonic quartal harmony should keep you off the streets for at least a few months.

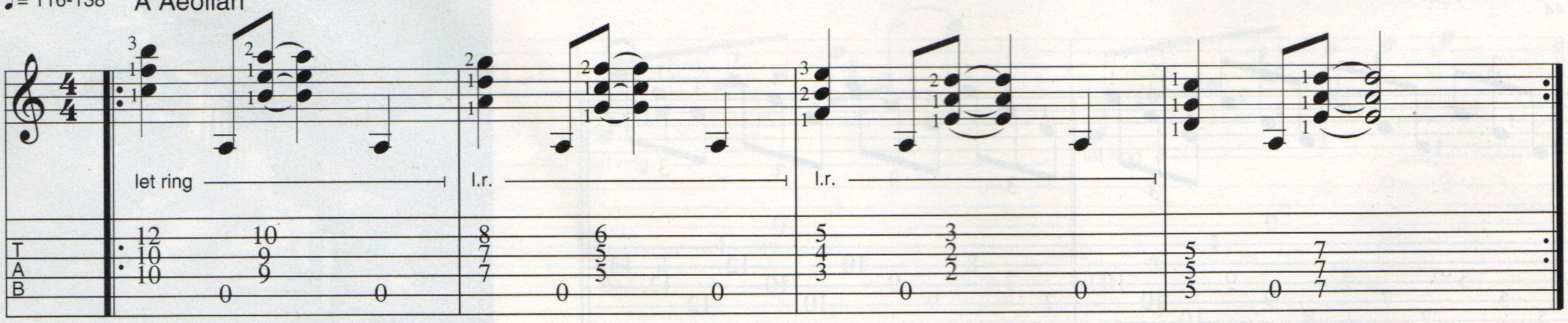
Thanks, Lenny, for your inspiration. Rest in peace. ■

The early days: Lenny thumbpicks a Martin D-28 flat-top.

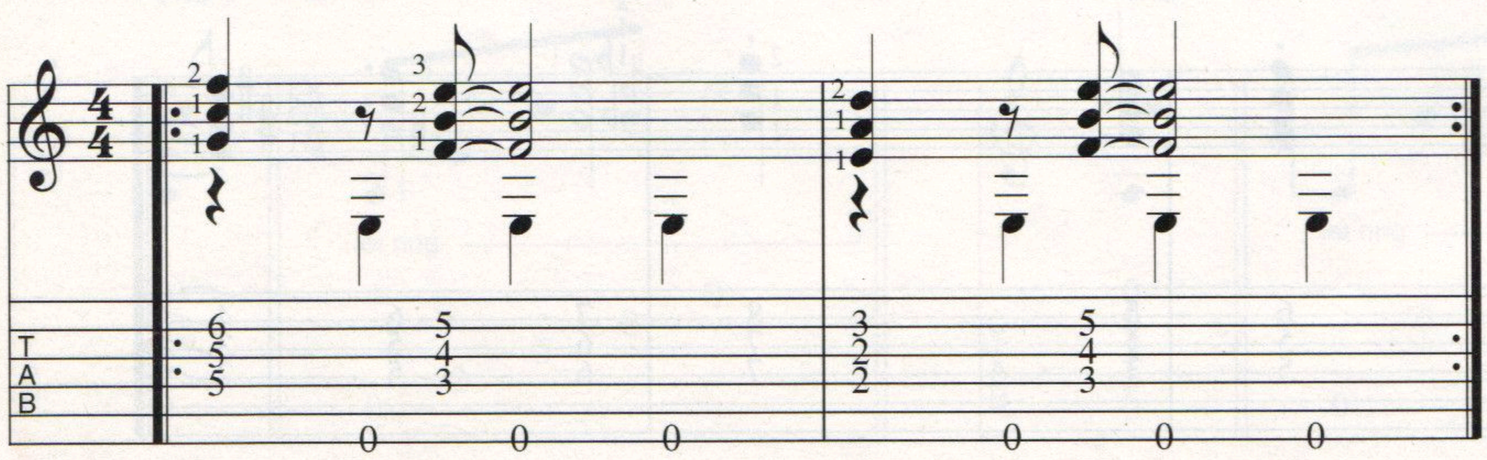
Ex. 13



Ex. 14



Ex. 15



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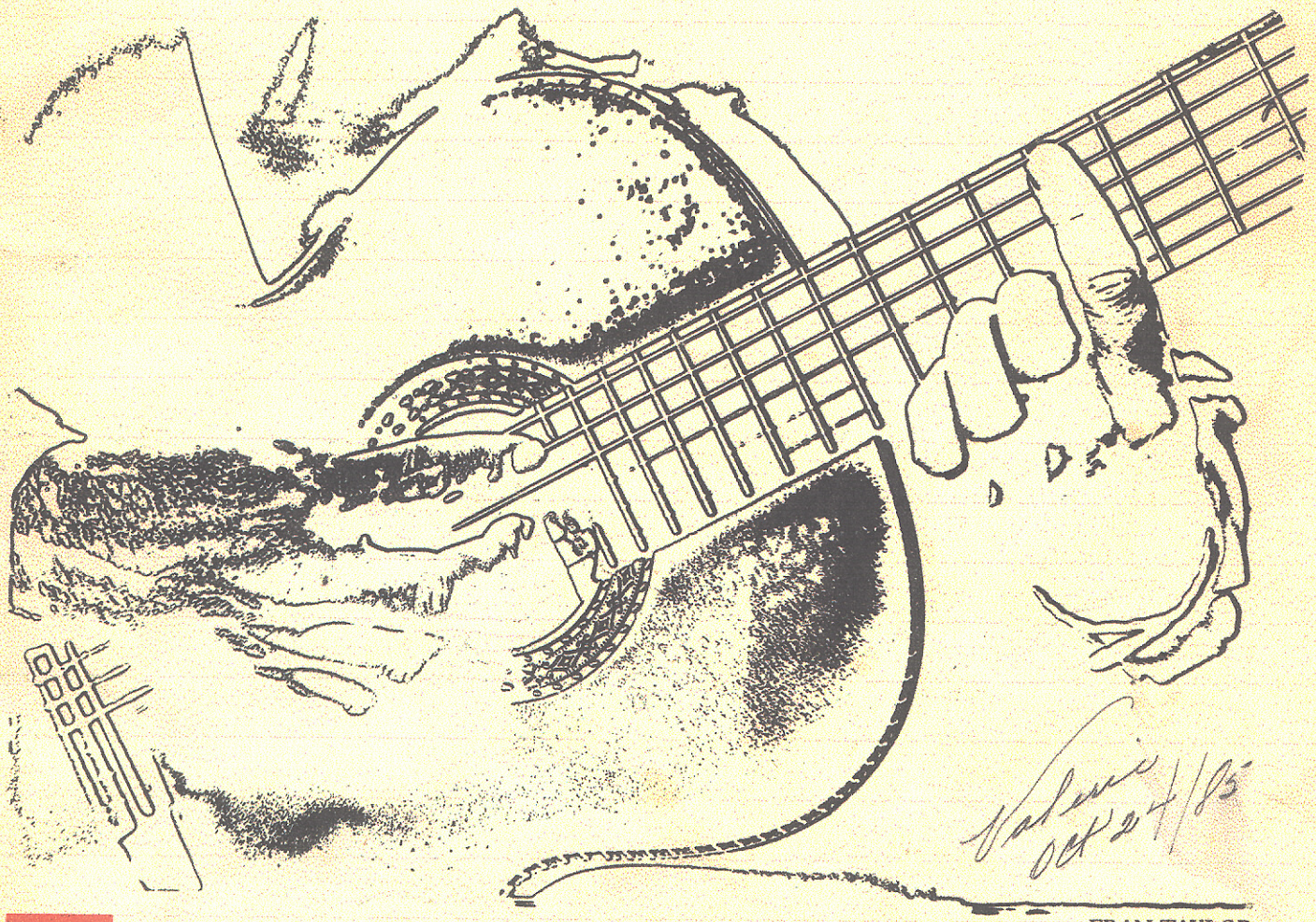

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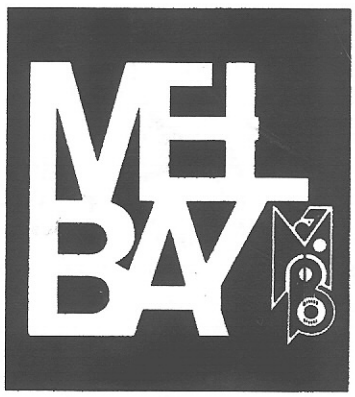


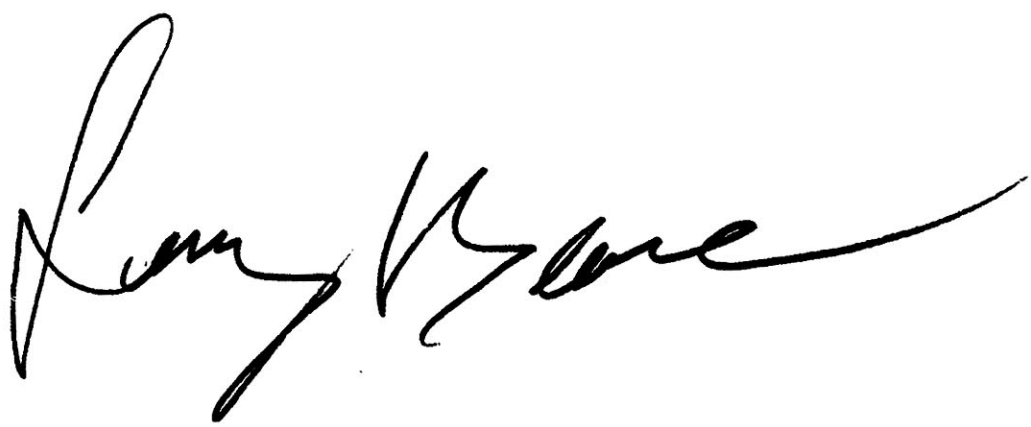
CONTENTS

I have been wanting to write a guitar book for six or seven years. I was always discouraged because I never ran into anyone who could really help me do it. Then I figured . . . well, maybe John Knowles and I could put out a good book. The more we talked about it, it felt real right.

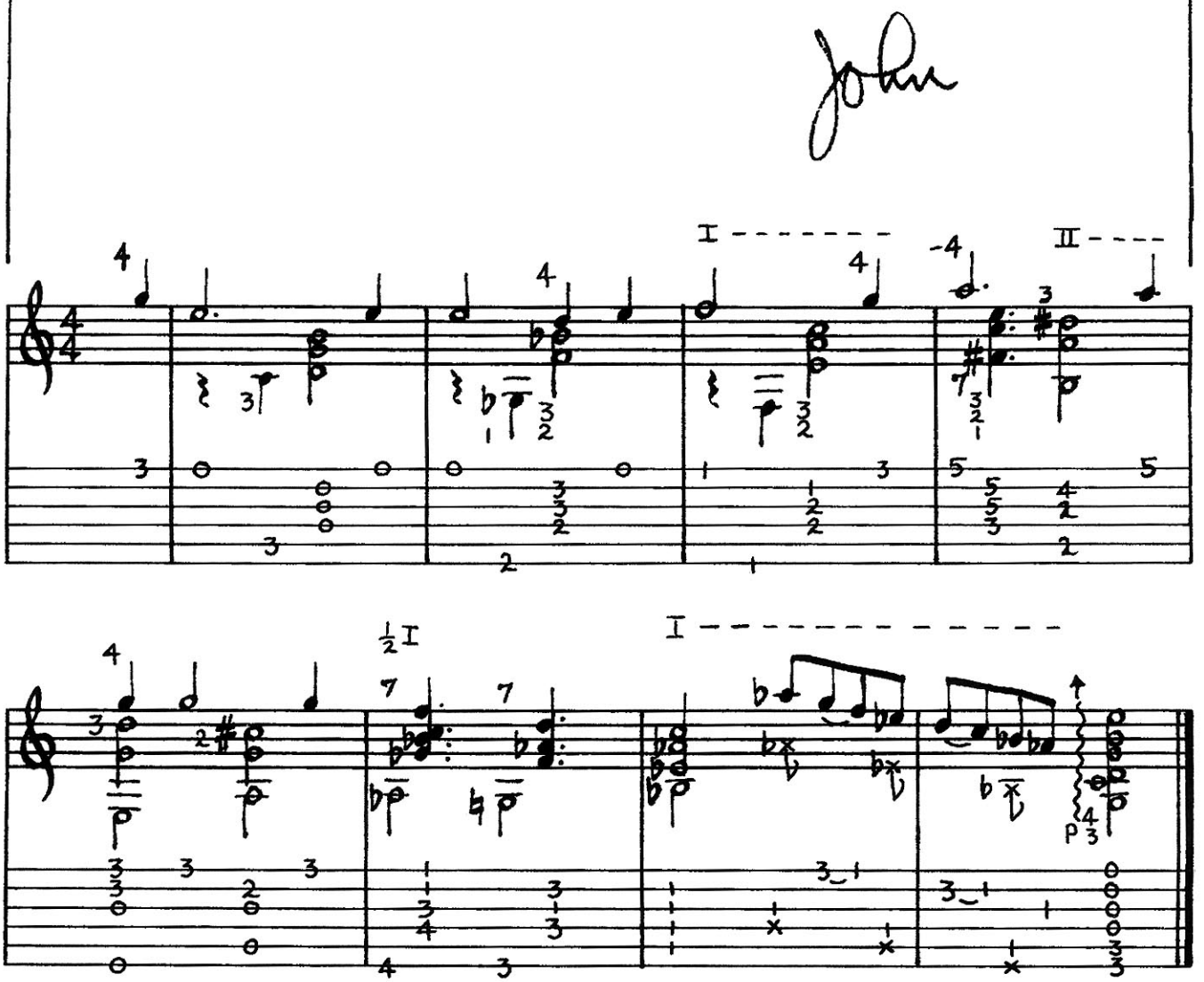
The most important thing about this book is the information. It's not exactly the notes. I mean you can get the notes but it's understanding the philosophy behind the notes that's important. This could lead a person to their own style of playing. I'm not trying to make you play the way I play. I want to lead you to yourself.

I've included some of the exercises that I went through to develop my own playing. If you feel discouraged at first, it's because they are hard to play . . . that's all. Keep playing them and after a while they will start to feel natural and you can add your own variations.

A lot of people helped me along the way. Of course there's Chet Atkins. I love Chet. If it hadn't been for him, I wouldn't have started playing . . . seriously. Without Bill Evans, I might have quit playing years ago. When I heard Bill play piano, it was a lifetime of inspiration. He made me realize that I really don't know what's happening because music keeps on changing.



I would like to give a special thanks to PAUL FORSTMAN, SKIP SORRELLE and BYRON FOGO. PAUL and SKIP helped me transcribe the solos at the back of the book. Believe me . . . it was at least a three man job. BYRON joined us at the proof reading stage. I hope that you will work as hard, and get as much out of it as we did.



The music in this book is written in both classic guitar notation and standard TAB. The numbers by the notes are left hand fingerings. A circled number is a string number. The numbers on the TAB lines give the fret and string location of each note. A Roman numeral is used to indicate the fret where a barre is made. The right hand fingers are indicated, p-thumb, i-index, m-middle and a-ring.

If you are used to reading TAB, look up at the music every now and then to see how it relates to what you are doing. If you are used to reading music, check the TAB to make sure that you are not playing the right notes in the wrong position. In either case, try following the printed music as you listen to the seminar cassette or the records containing the solos.

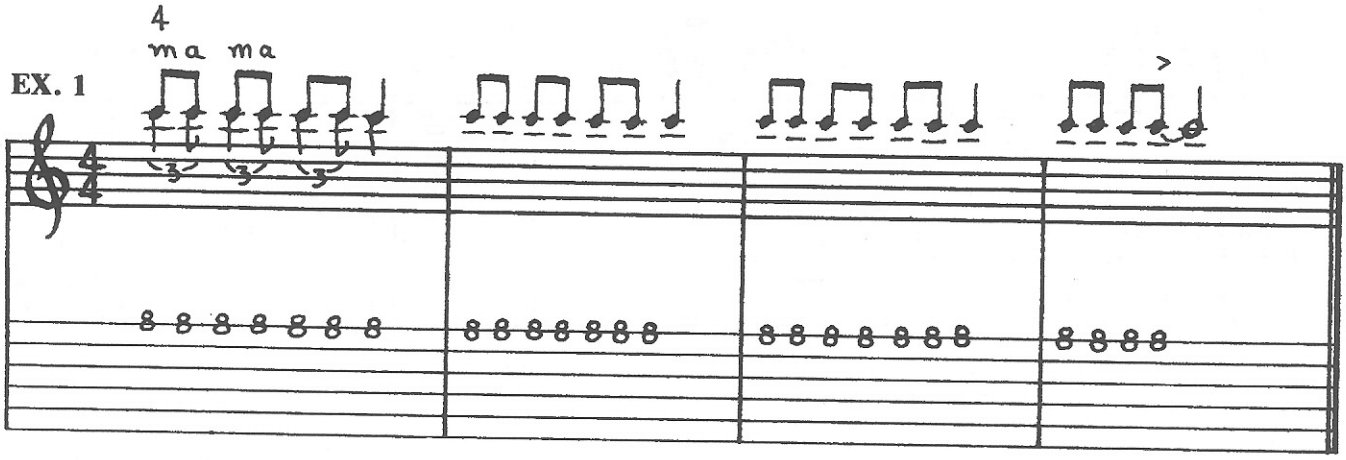
SEMINAR

BUILDIN' THE BLUES

Listen to the cassette as you follow the text and examples below.

In EX. 1, the eighth note pairs are played with a triplet feel. There is a slight accent on the second note in each pair.

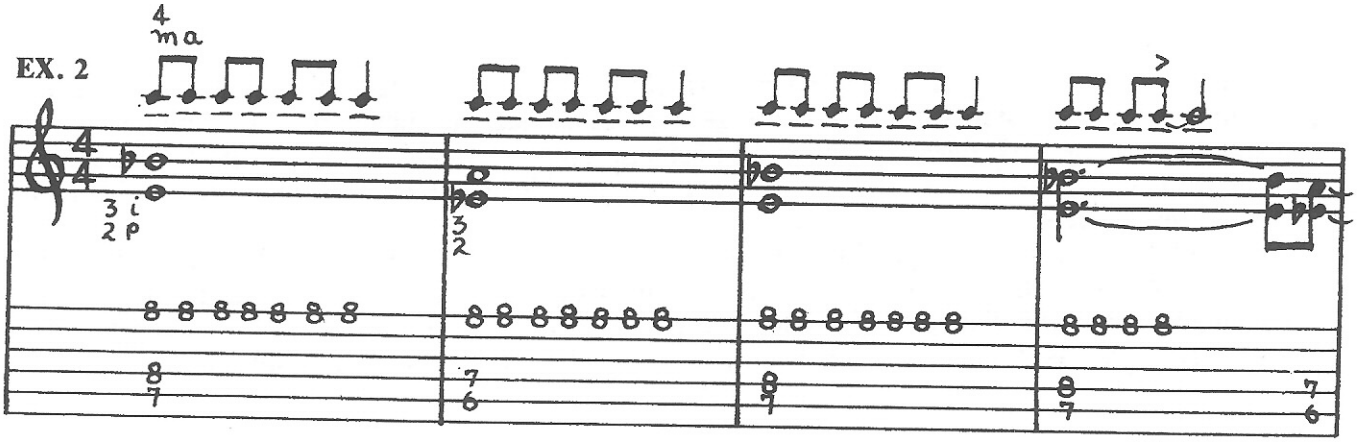
EX. 1



Lenny: So at the same time, I'm going to sustain two note chords. . . tritones that will suggest a C7th. We'll leave the root out because in this case we're using the note "C" on top.

The notes in a C7th chord are C, E, G and B♭ . The E, B♭ tritone will suggest a C7th chord when played with a C bass or against a C melody.

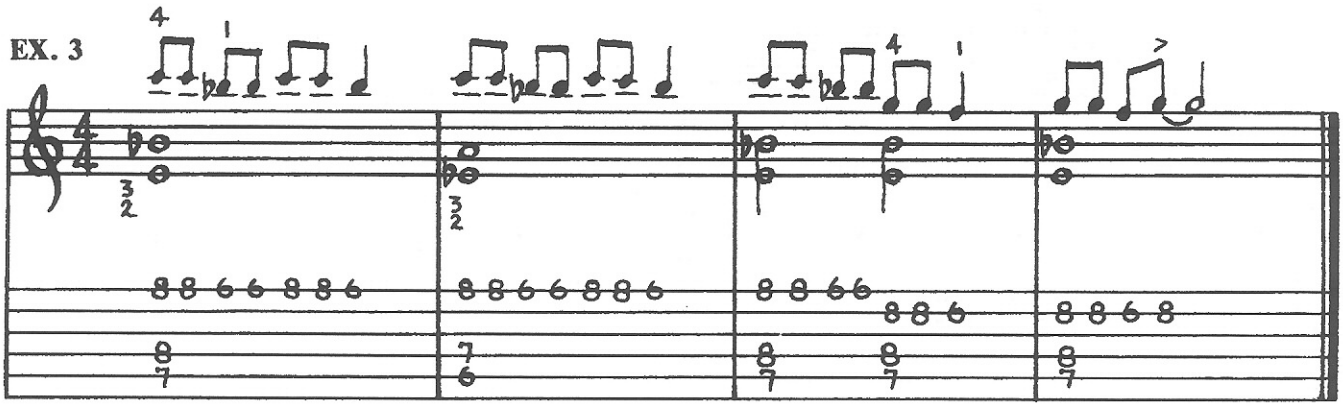
EX. 2



John: That would be where the four chord comes.

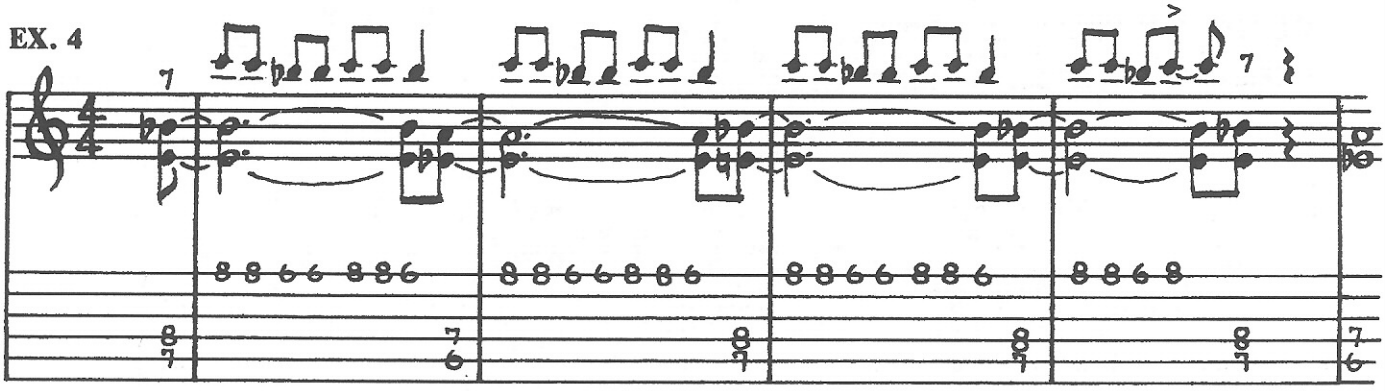
L: Yeah. Then you can change the notes and maybe play something like two "C's", two "B♭'s".

EX. 3



L: Then it becomes a melody. So you go 1, 2, 3, 4& and on the 4&, the chord comes in. That's what makes it swing.

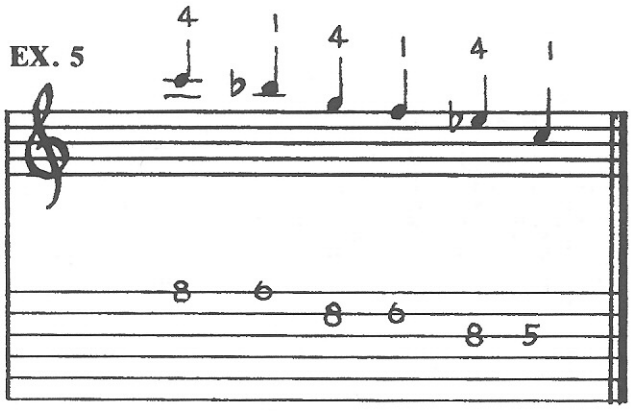
EX. 4



L: Right? So then you're getting into syncopation.

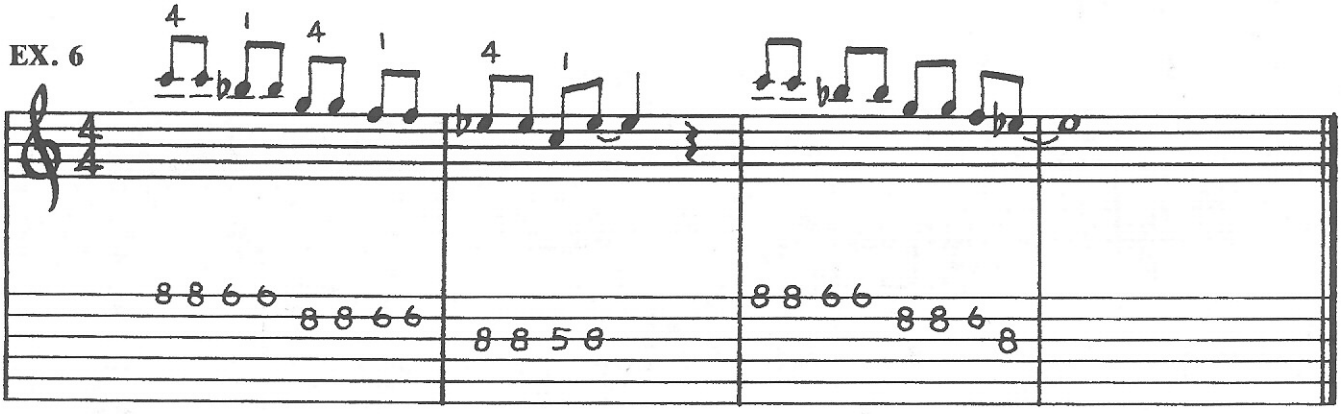
L: The pentatonic scale is. . .

EX. 5



L: . . . and that scale will fit against a one chord and it also fits against a four chord. So we'll make up a little melody going. . .

EX. 6



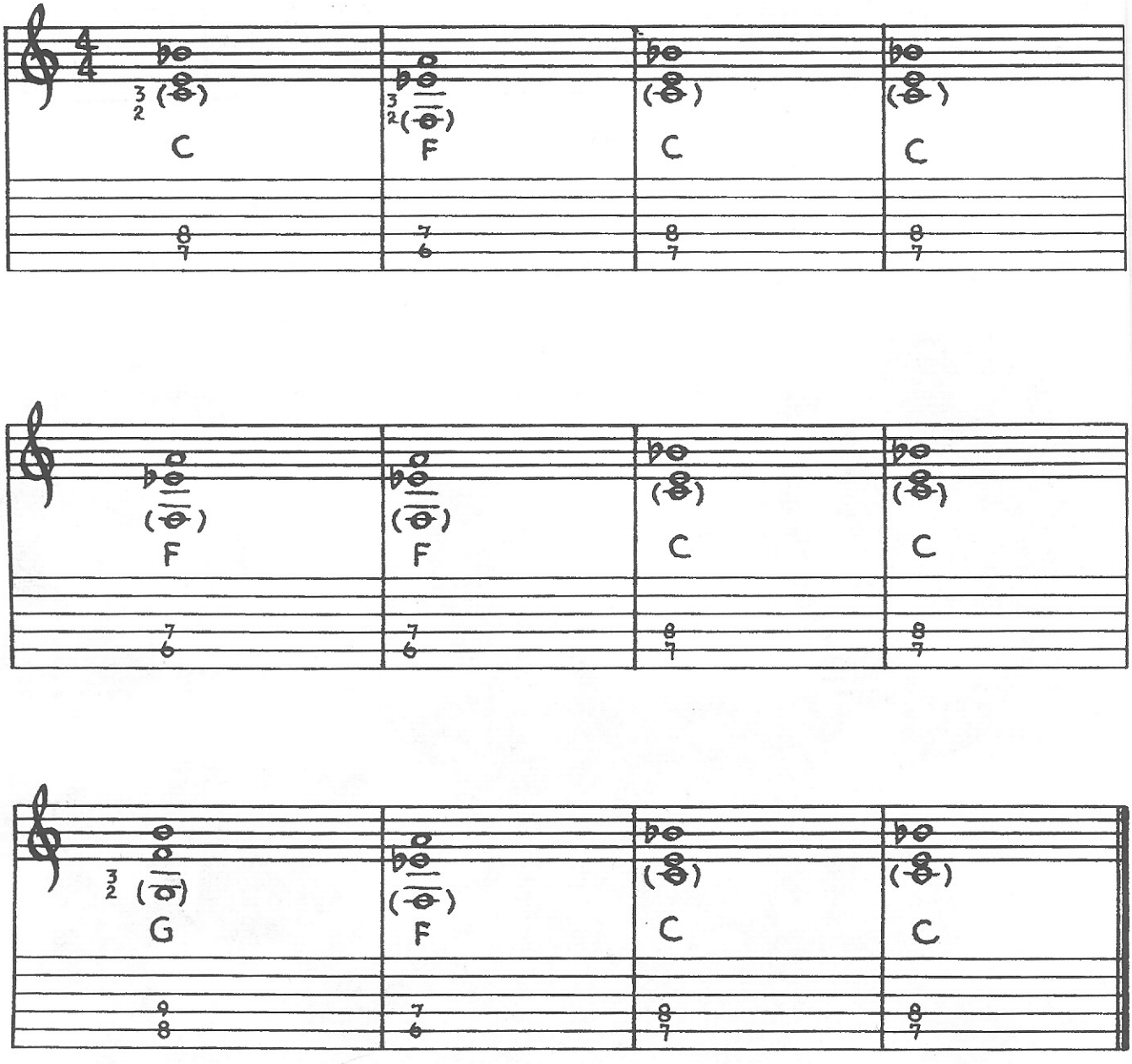
Now Lenny adds the bass part from EX. 4 to the melody in EX. 6. Notice that he leaves out the melody note "F" on the 4& of the first bar to make room for the four chord.

EX. 7

Lenny and John

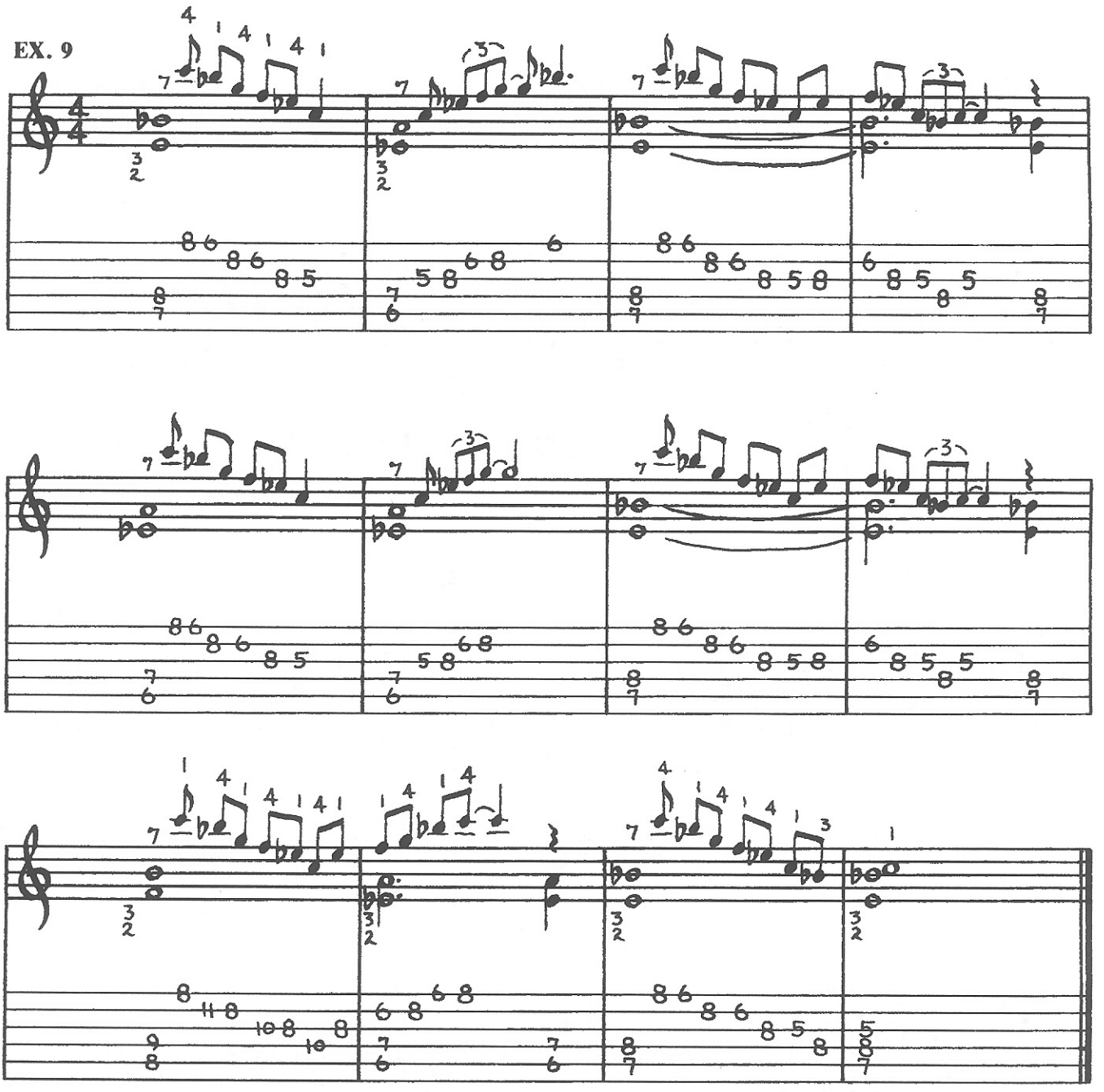
Practice singing chord roots while playing tritones to improve your ability to hear the implied seventh chords.

EX. 8



When you can sing the roots, practice singing the pentatonic scale against the tritones. Notice that Lenny's vocalizing is playable on the guitar. With practice, your fingers and voice will work together.

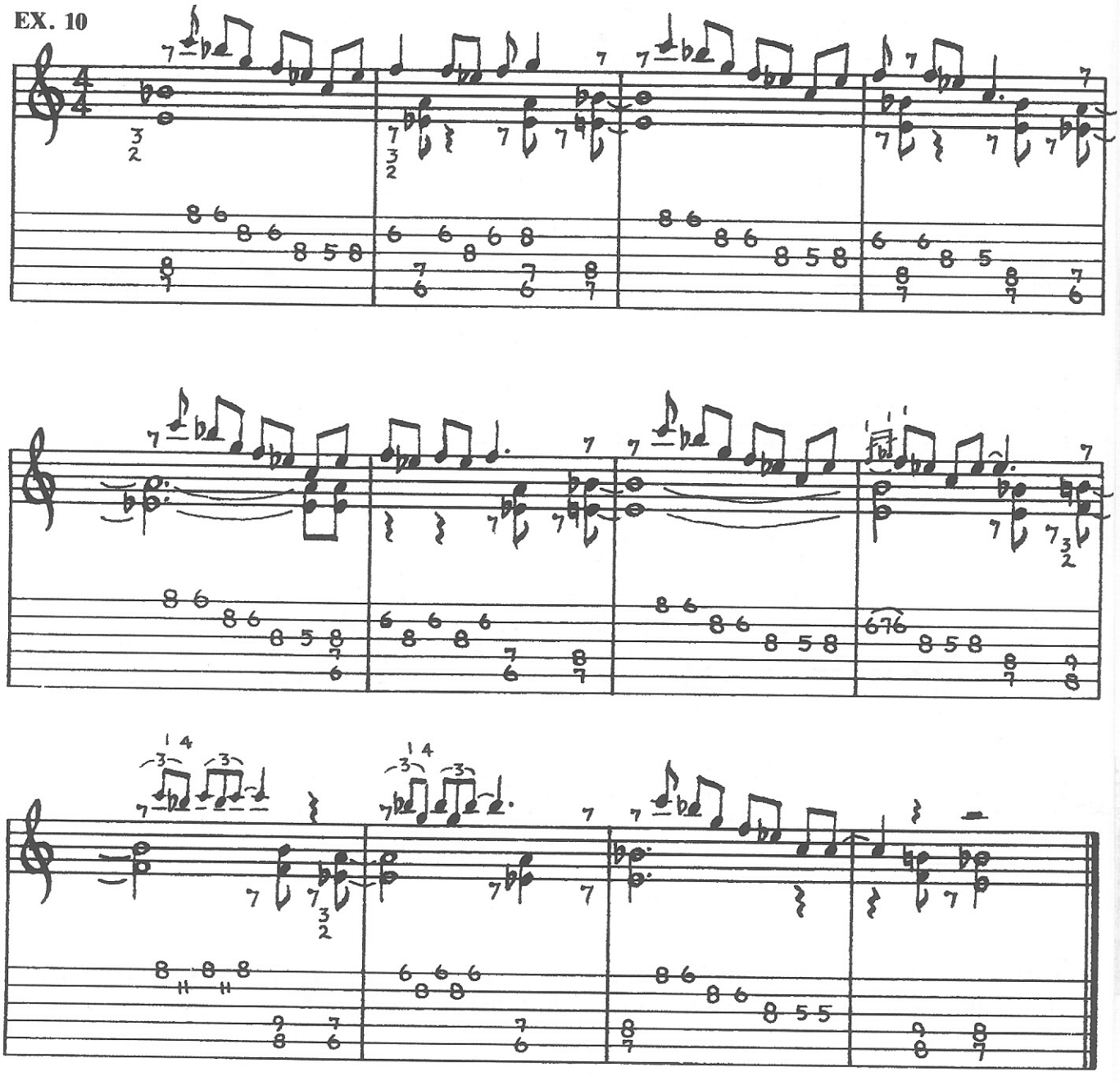
EX. 9

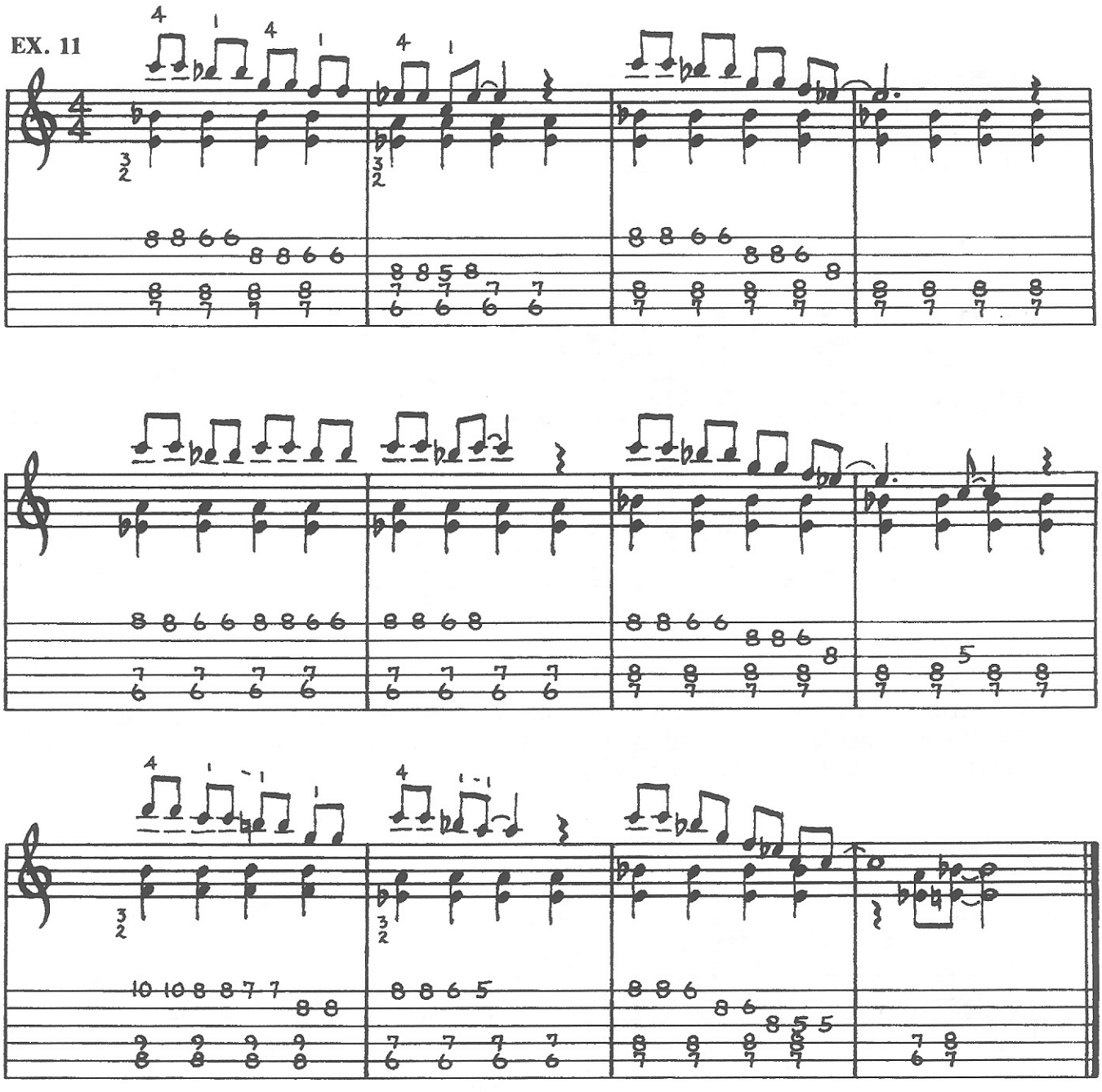


L: So we've used one scale against three chords and it sounds good. The idea is that it simplifies how to play the blues. I mean because you know that pentatonic scale is going to fit. So it gives you a little bit of confidence.

It all comes together in EX. 10. On the cassette, it takes Lenny about five minutes to get to this point. It may take you a little longer.

EX. 10



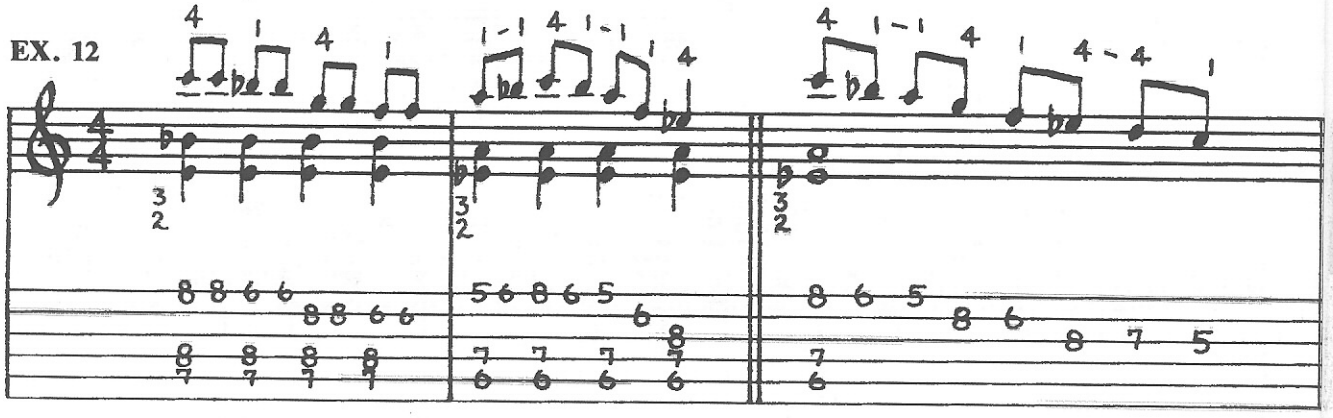


In measure 9, Lenny uses a fragment of the G mixolydian scale against the G7 tritone. In measure 10, he uses a fragment of the F mixolydian scale against the F7 tritone.

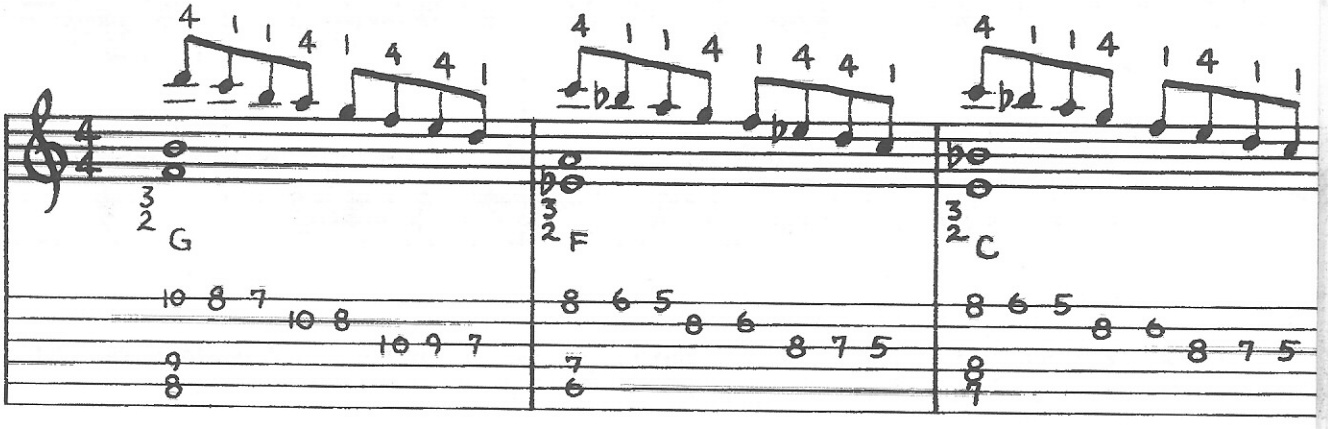
L: It's a good idea to try and play straight four on the bottom because it is kind of hard. It's a discipline because you have to keep doing the same thing all the time, but it creates a nice little groove and if you can play something on top of it, it gives you independence.

L: Playing the pentatonic like that, that's the simplest way of playing the blues. That comes out of gospel music. But then when Charlie Parker came along, he had a different scale for each time he changed chords. So he might use the pentatonic on the "C" chord. Then when he'd go to the "F" chord he'd use the mixolydian scale of "F" just to change the sound.

EX. 12



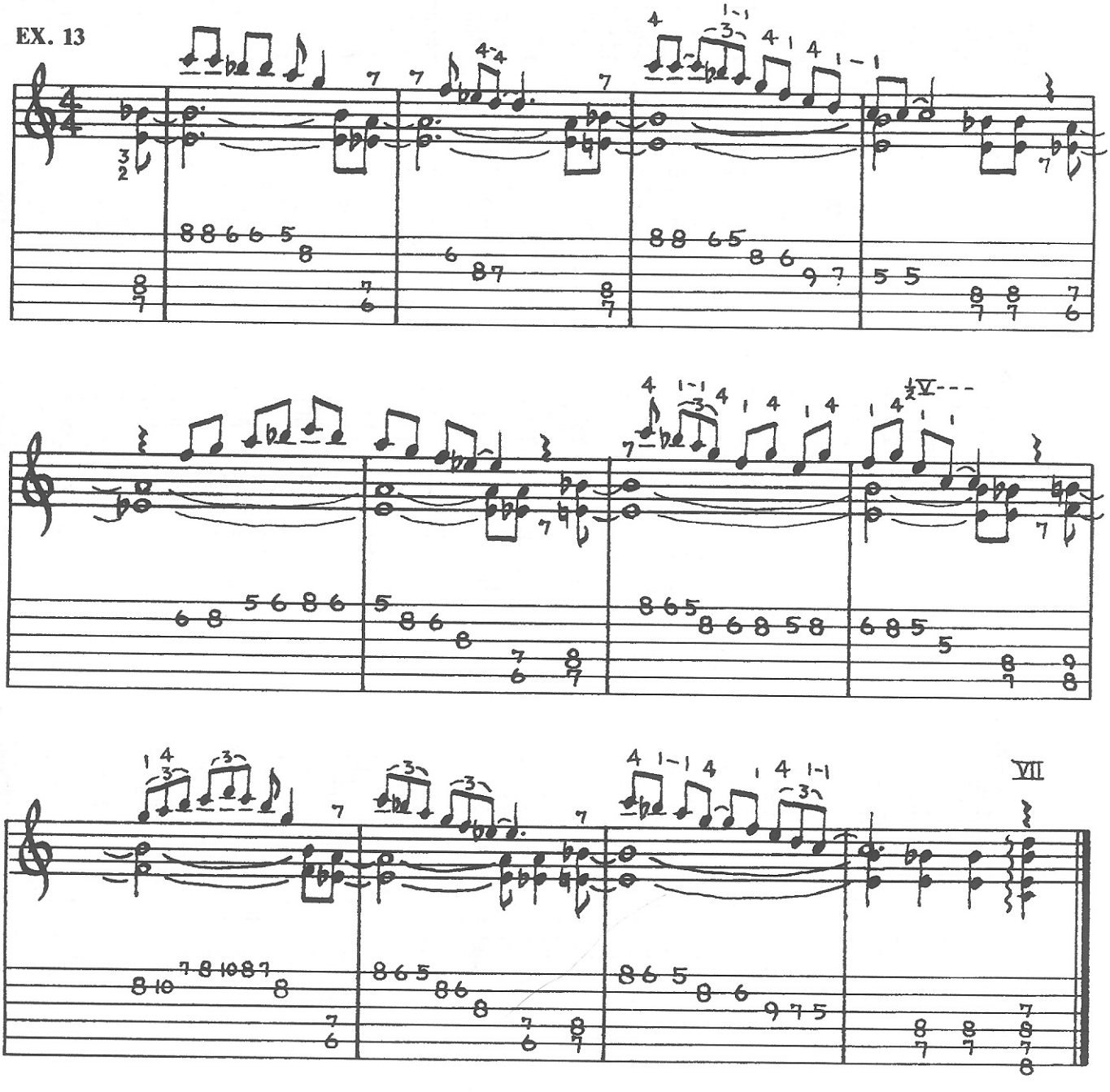
The mixolydian scale sounds like a major scale with a flatted seventh. The G, F and C mixolydian scales and the corresponding tritones are shown below. Notice that you can reach about an octave of scale from each tritone.



L: Or you could change the whole sound of the blues by playing a "C" mixolydian scale instead of the pentatonic.

Lenny plays an F mixolydian scale against the F chord as in EX. 12

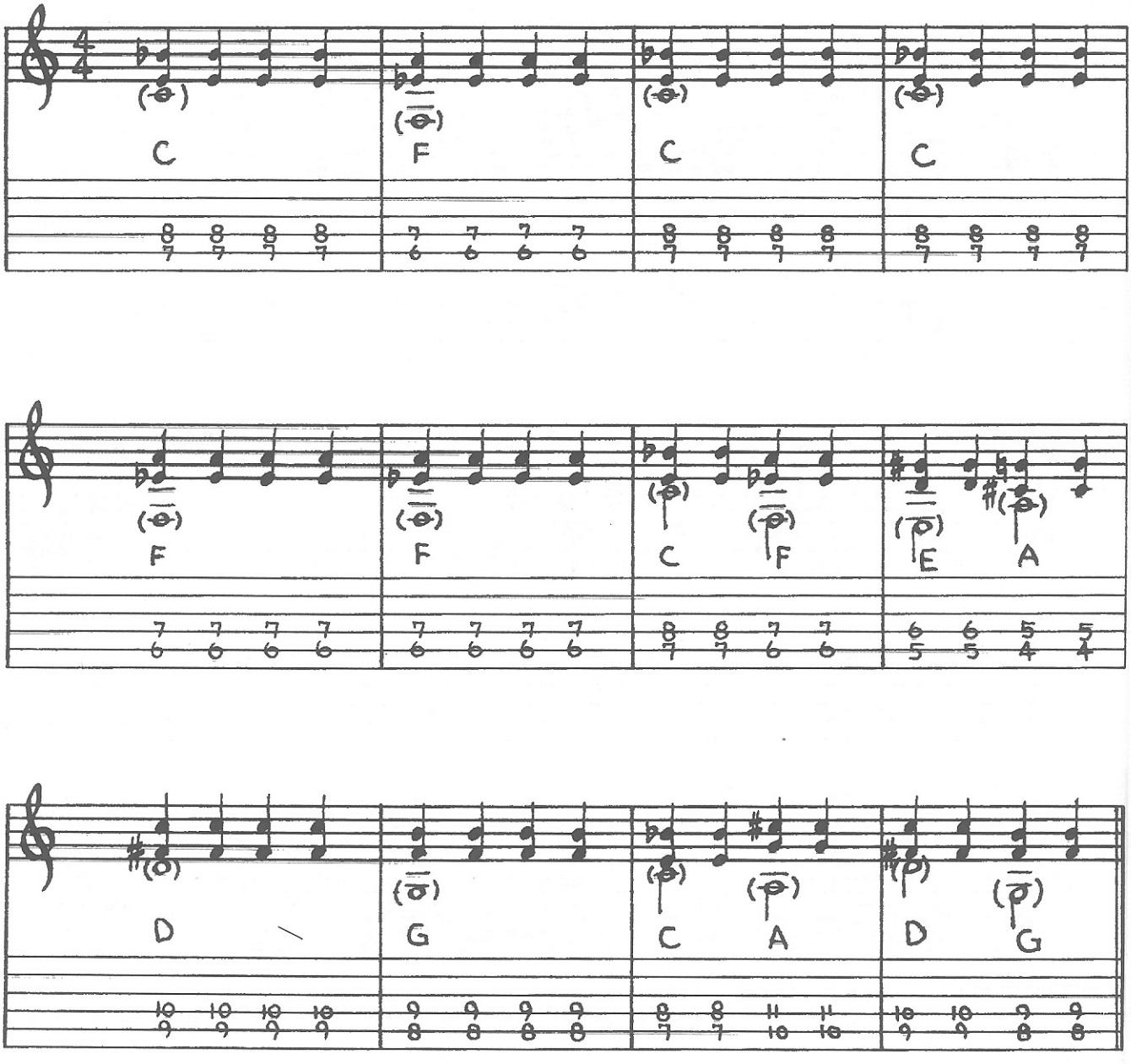
EX. 13



L: So it gives you a blues but it's a different kind of color. . . a different kind of feeling. So that's another way to play the blues.

L: This is the blues using more than three chords.

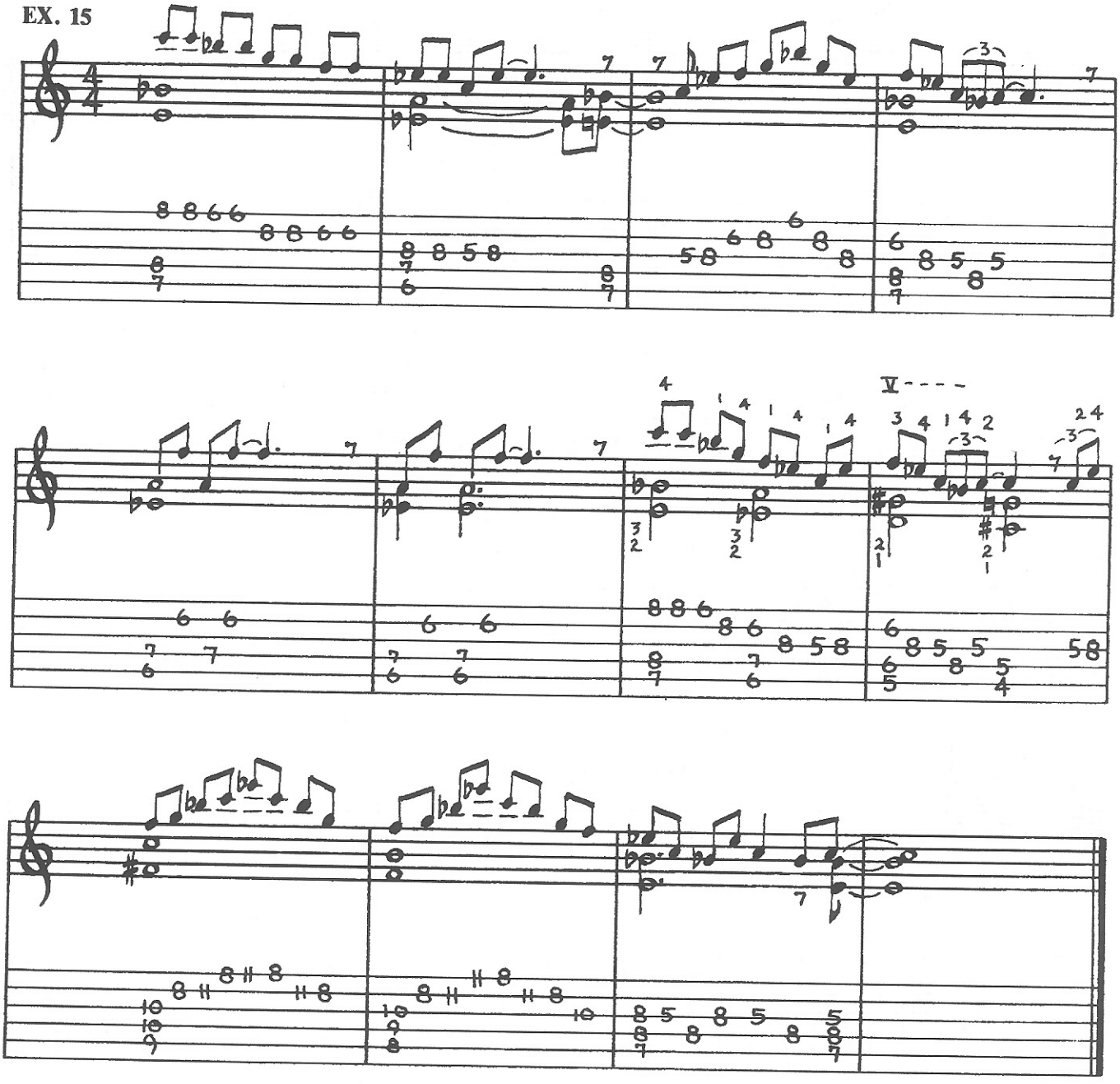
EX. 14



L: I wanted to make sure them chords sounded good so I started singing my own roots because I'd be practicing at home and there wasn't any bass player.

And now. . . twelve bars using the pentatonic scale over the changes of EX. 14. Again, Lenny's singing is playable.

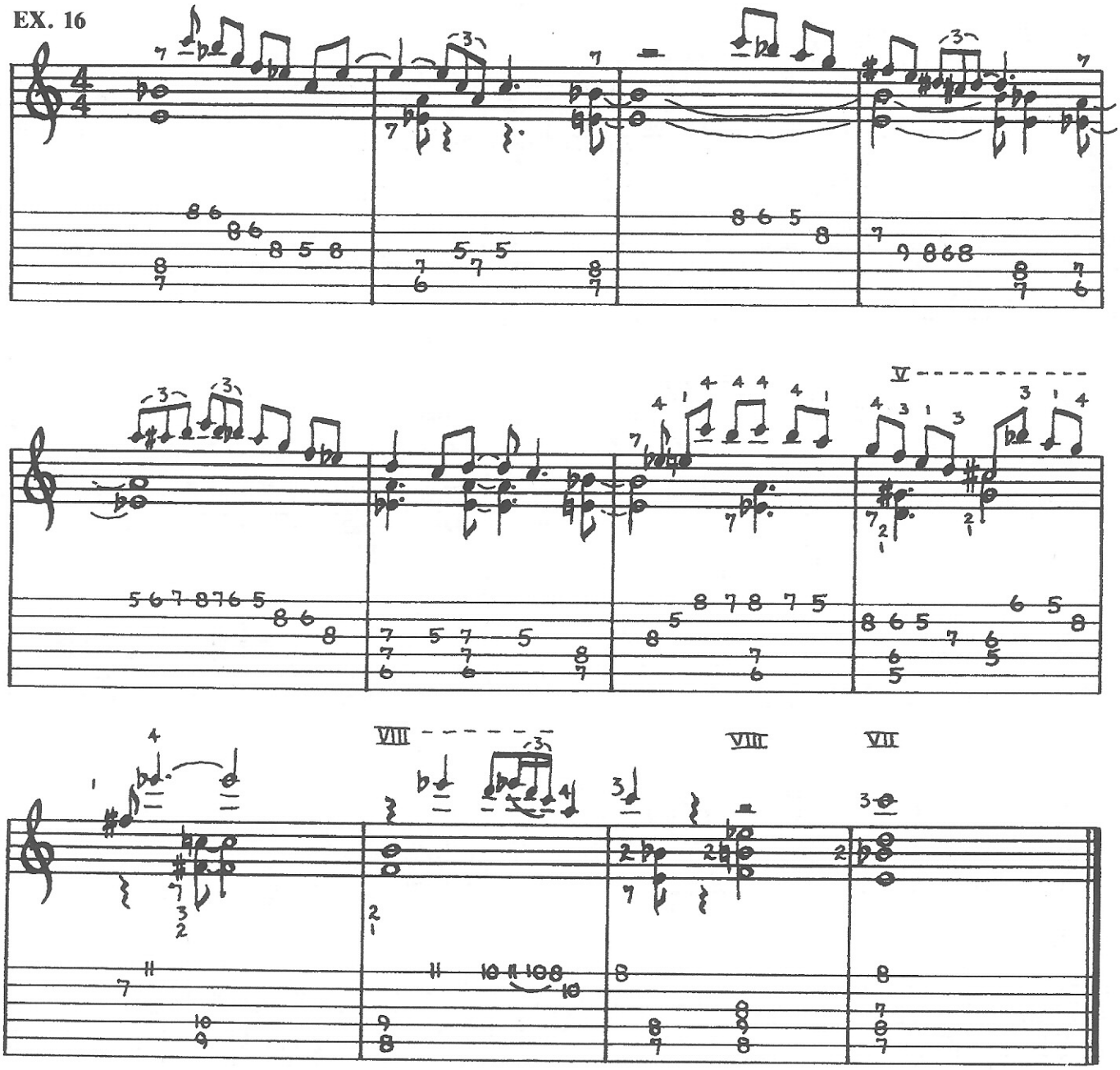
EX. 15



L: That was mostly pentatonic.

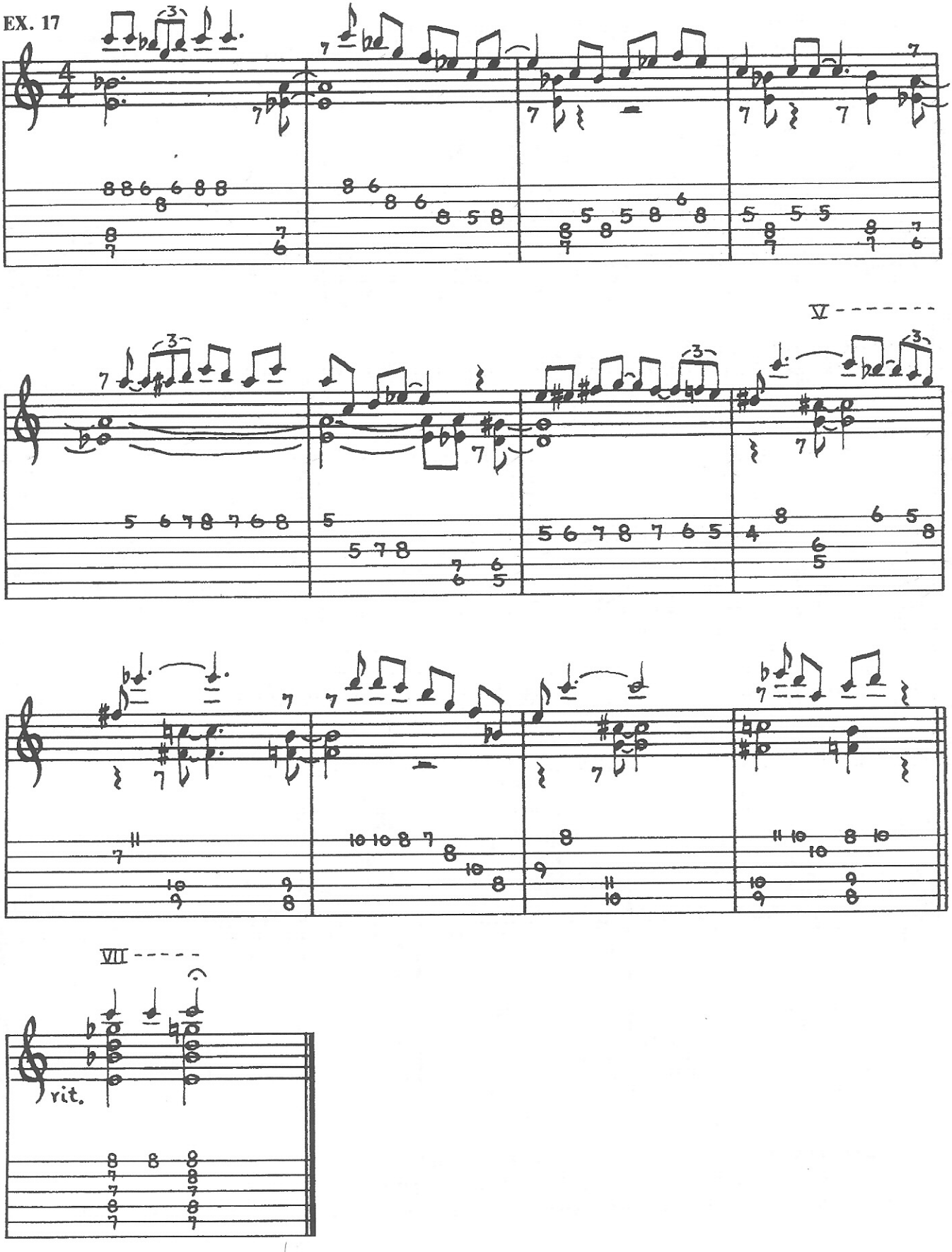
In EX. 16 Lenny plays over the changes of EX. 14. Notice that the G-C# tritone in measure 8 is inverted. It still implies an A7 chord. Also there are a few outside melody notes. Check out measures 4 and 5.

EX. 16



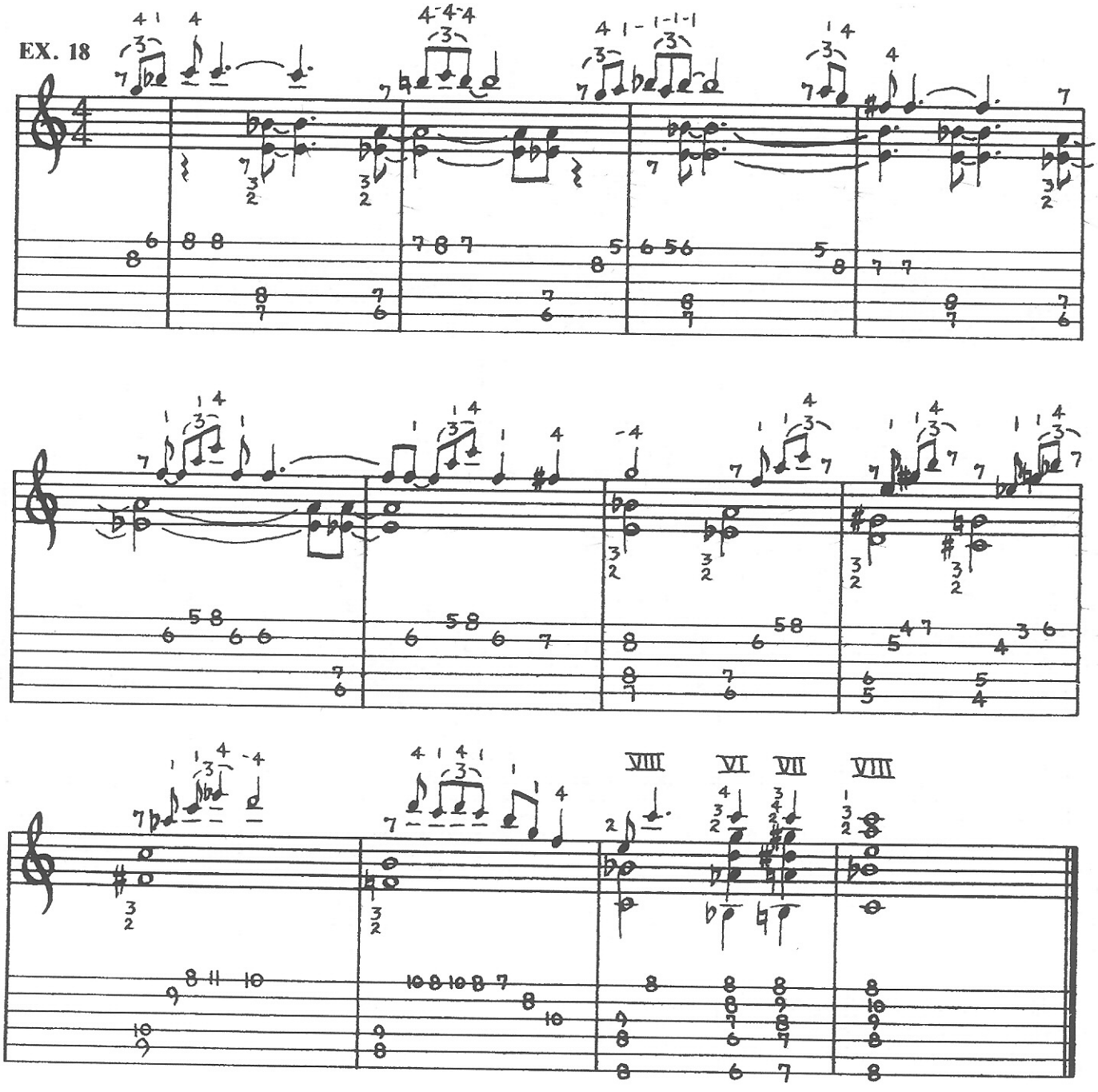
In EX. 17, Lenny plays a variation on the changes given in EX. 14. In measure 7, there is an E7 implied by the D-G# tritone. This E7 replaces three chords (C7, F7 and E7) in EX. 14. It gives you more time to play over one chord.

EX. 17



Notice how the repeated triplet figure gives unity to this twelve bars. The outside B♮ in measure 2 and F# in measure 4 are both 4# against their respective chords. The 4# is characteristic of the lydian scale.

EX. 18

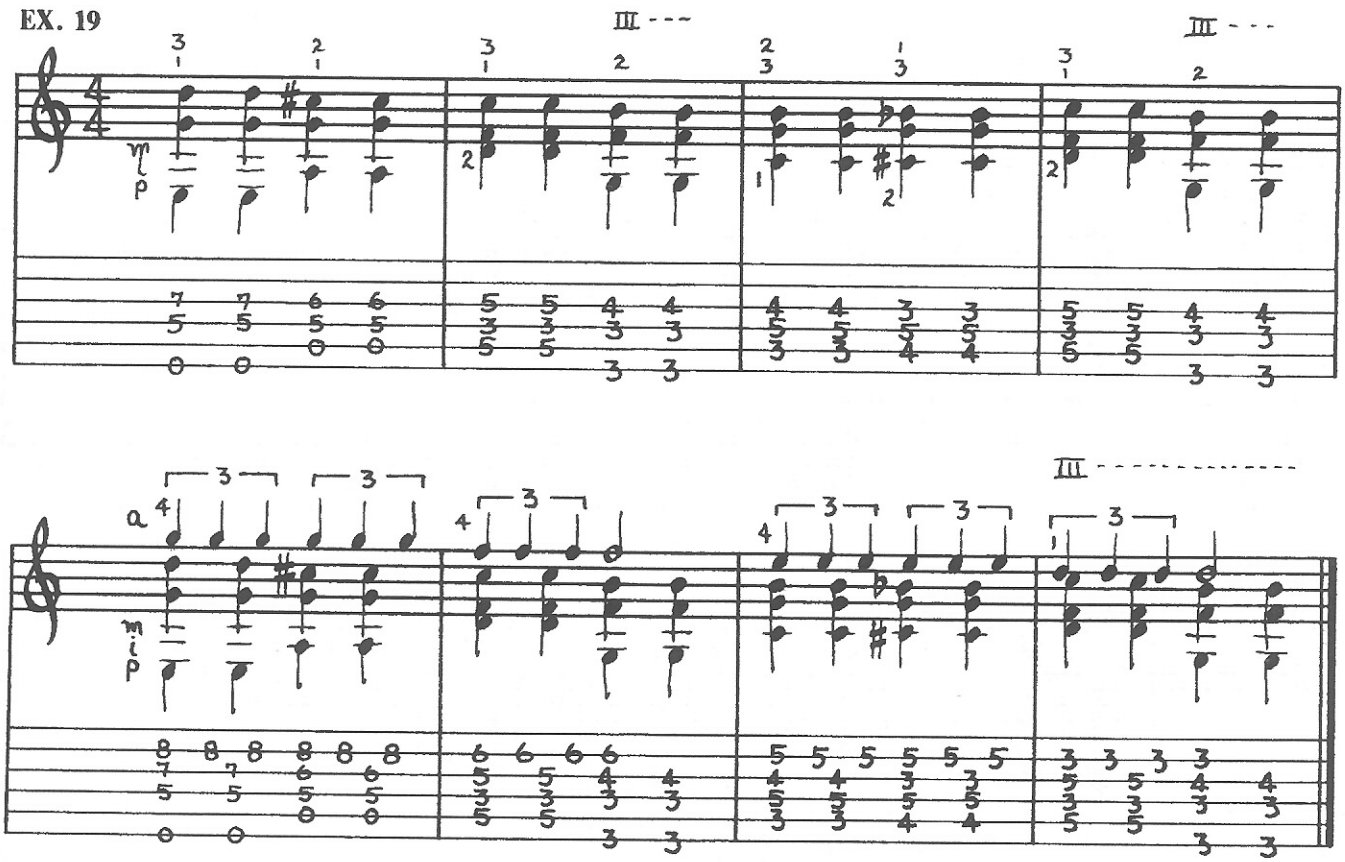


L: So you have all these possibilities. Once you know these modes you can mix them up as you go along and that's what's so nice about it. There's the discipline but in using that discipline that's how you reach your freedom. That's how you get to the real freedom by using that kind of discipline.

THREE AGAINST TWO

There is no easy way to get the feel of playing quarter note triplets against straight quarter notes. Try listening to Lenny and focusing on the steady triplet while letting the quarters soak in. Then reverse the process and focus on the quarters. Now try playing the triplets while listening to the quarters. By now you should be screaming to try it all together. . . go ahead.

EX. 19



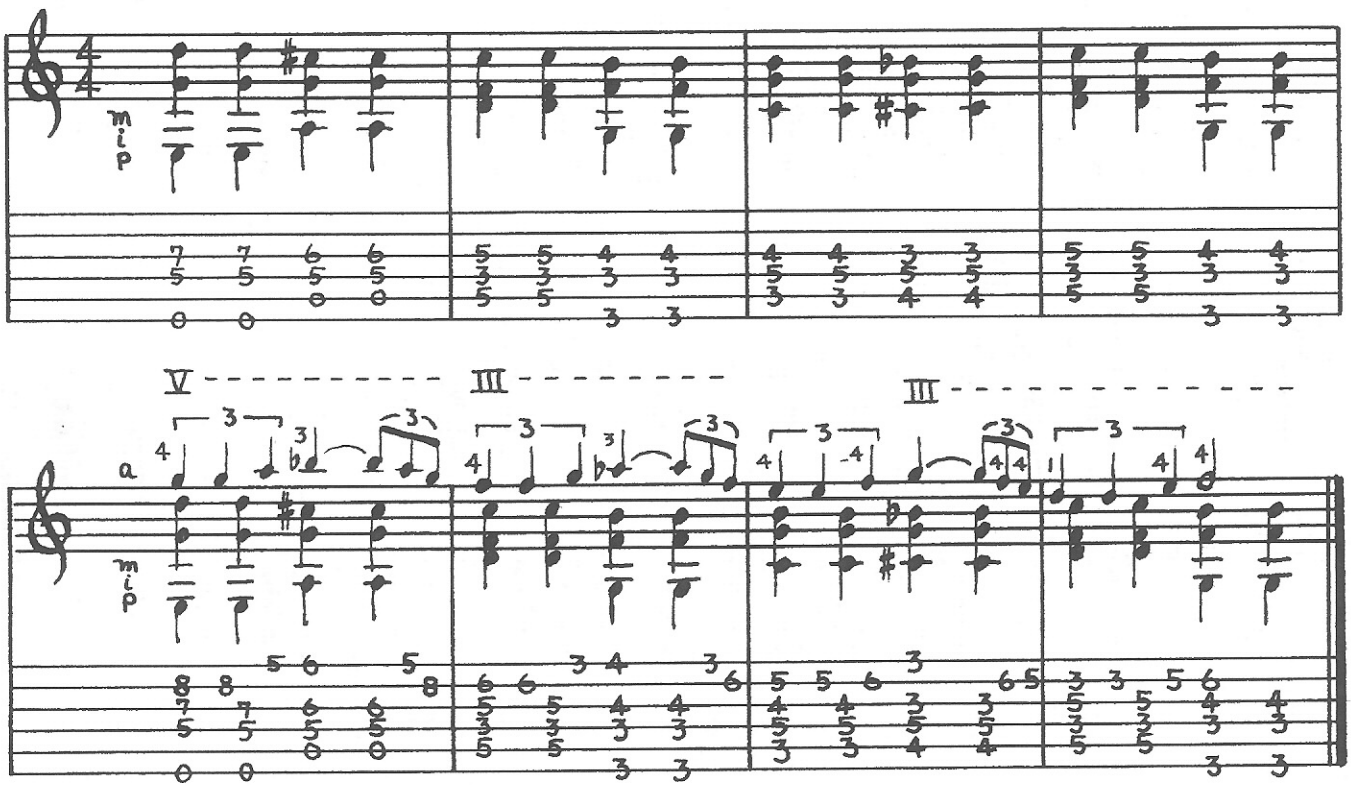
EX. 20 mixes quarter triplets with eighth triplets against a straight quarter note comp. Listen to Lenny and try tapping the eighth note triplets which are built into the swing feel and you will hear an underlying pattern.

It might help to count out loud, "123123" and accent every other number.

> > >
1 2 3 1 2 3 . . .
↓ ↓

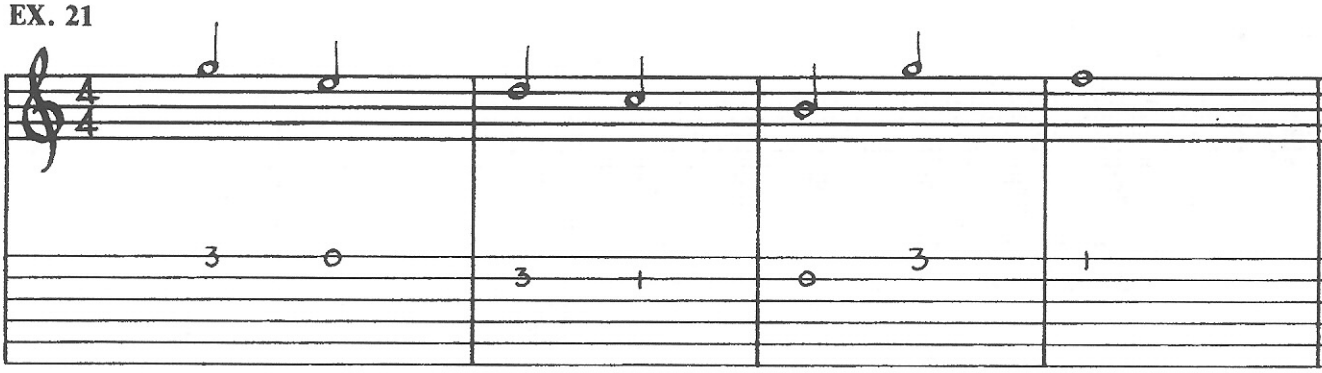
The numbers are eighth note triplets and the accents fall on quarter note triplets. Now if you can pat your foot on the "1", that's the straight quarter comp.

EX. 20



In EX. 21 Lenny plays the first phrase of "Freight Train".

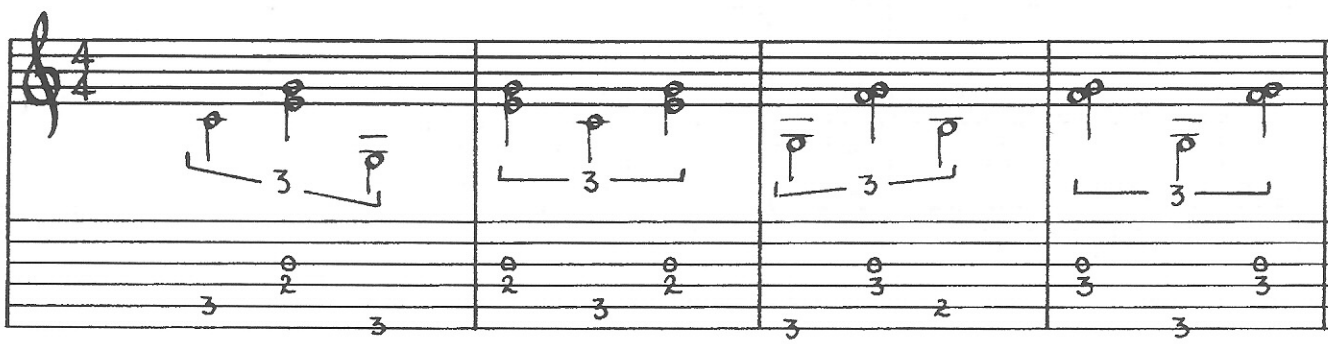
EX. 21



EX. 22 is a half-note triplet accompaniment to the first phrase of "Freight Train". Notice how the first measure is boom-chic-boom and the next is chic-boom-chic. When you hear it together, it sounds like boom-chic-boom-chic but the timing is odd.

L: And you're going. . .

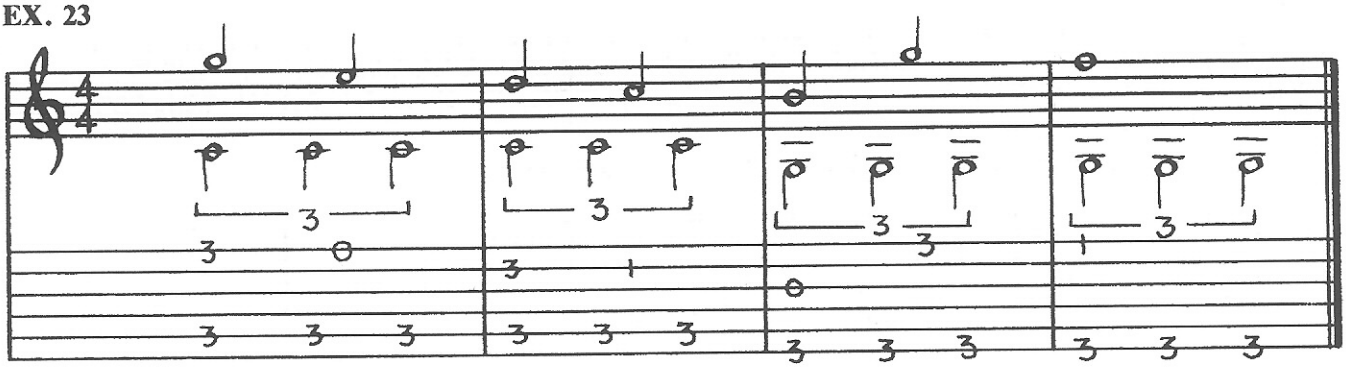
EX. 22



EX. 23 is the upside down of EX. 19. The triplet is on the bottom and the straight time is on the top.

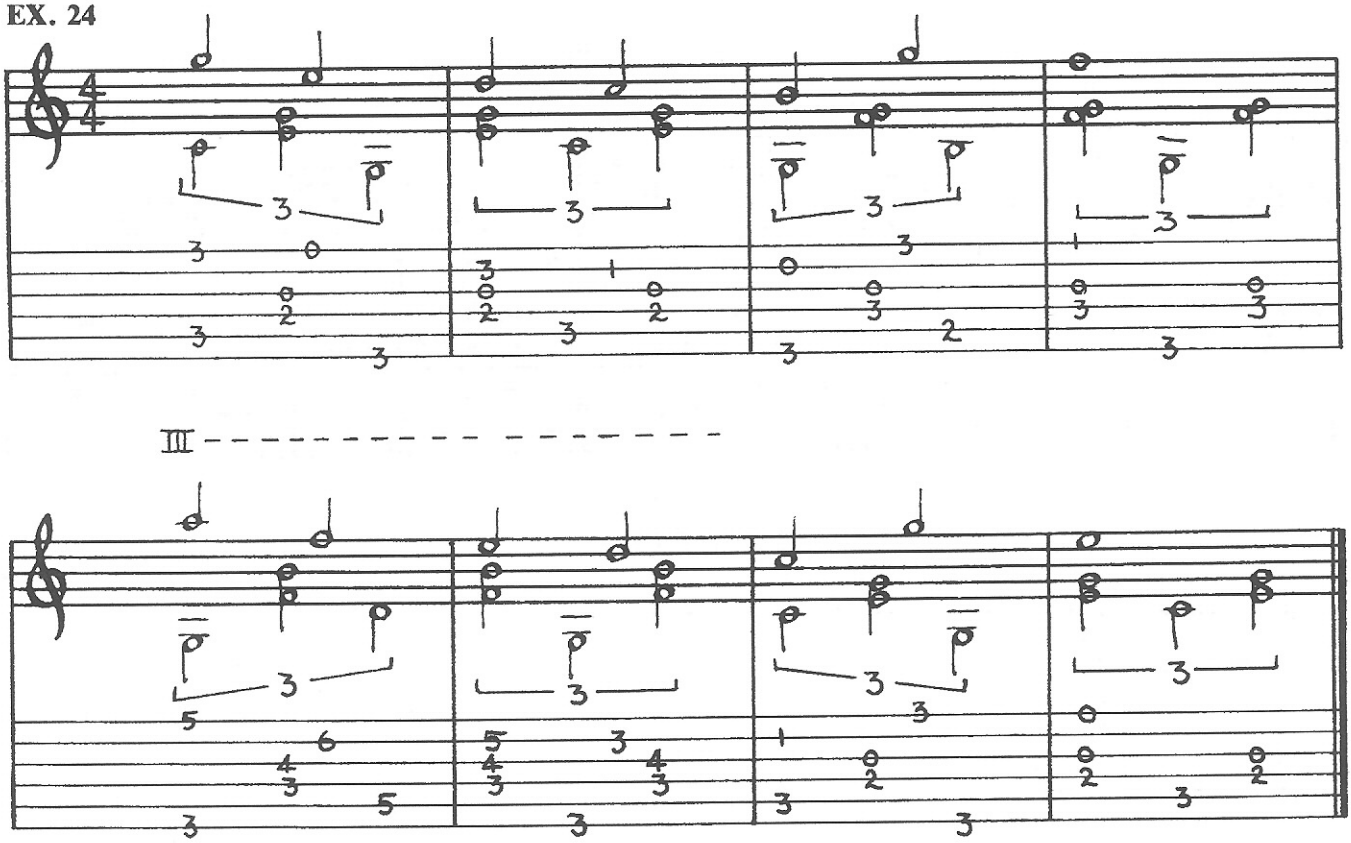
L: So it's like going. . .

EX. 23



L: Right? The quarter triplet's on the bottom. But you're not playing bass chord-chord. . . you're playing bass-chord-bass-chord. So it sounds like you're playing in 4/4. But you're using a three feel. It's mind boggling.

EX. 24



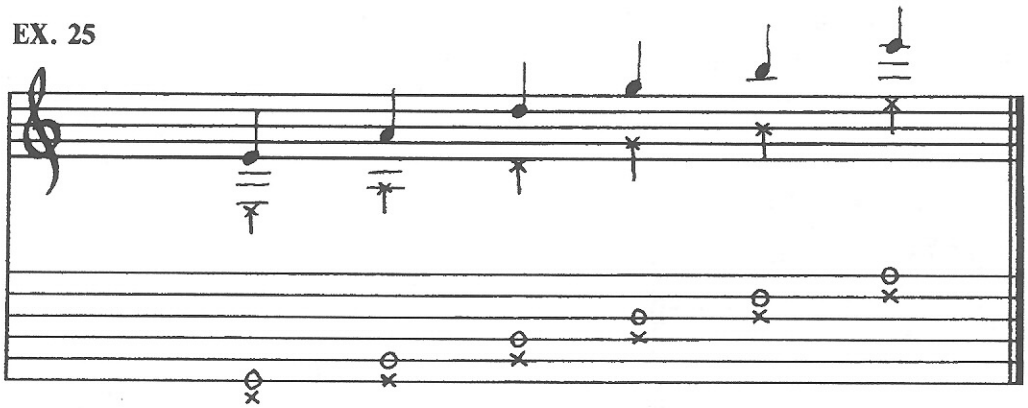
HARMONICS AT WORK

L: I first learned to do the harmonics when I was living on the farm. You know and picking it with a pick and using my left hand to play the harmonics. What we're going to do now is touch the harmonic with the first finger and pick it with your thumb pick.

Touch the sixth string at the twelfth fret with the tip of your right index finger. Now sound the string with your thumb (pick). Lift your index finger right after the harmonic sounds so that the note will ring. It may help to keep your index finger straight so that moving your thumb will not cause your index finger to contract.

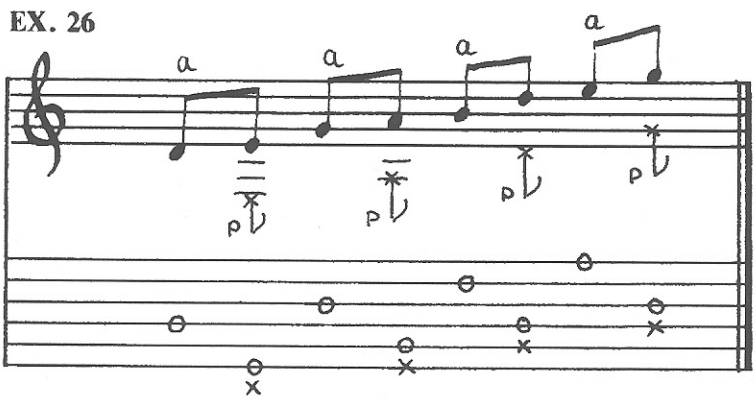
When you sound a harmonic, you will hear a pitch that is one octave higher than the pitch of the fretted (or open) note. The notation shows a regular note (♩) for the pitch you hear and a cue note (𝅗𝅥) for the note you fret. In the tab, harmonics are indicated by an "X" under the fret number.

EX. 25



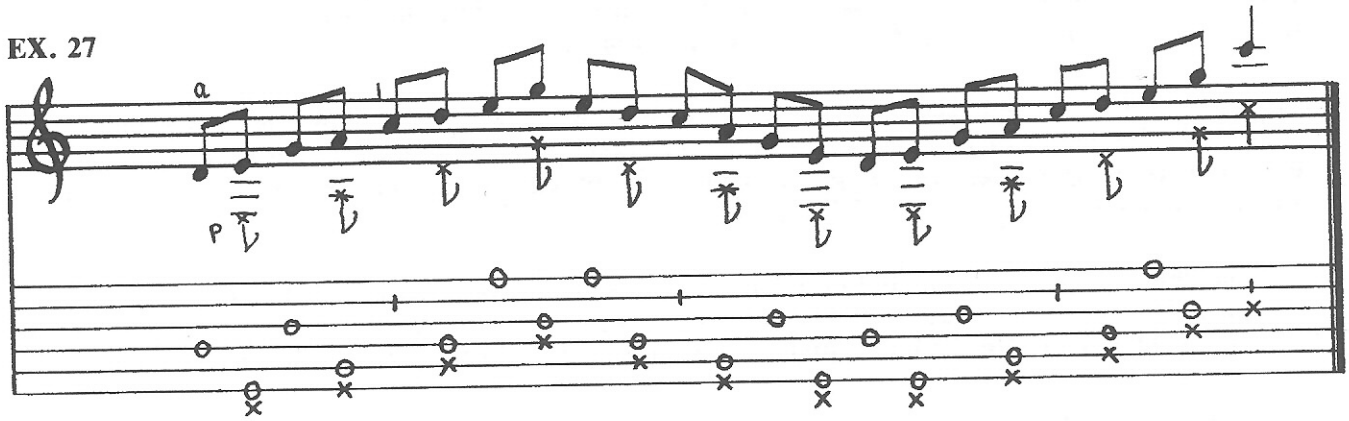
In EX. 26, sound the open fourth string with your right ring finger. Then sound the harmonic as in EX. 25. The two notes in succession create the illusion that two harmonics were played.

EX. 26



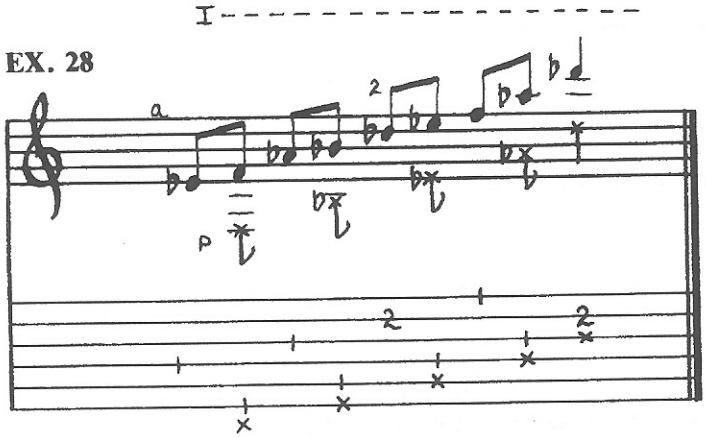
L: Say I add a "C" note here. . . and see what happens.

EX. 27



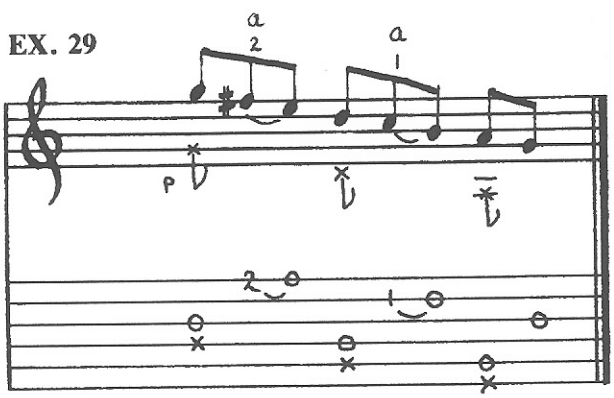
EX. 28 is EX. 27 with a barre. Now you must touch the string twelve frets above the fretted note to sound a harmonic. This twelve fret distance always divides the string in half.

EX. 28



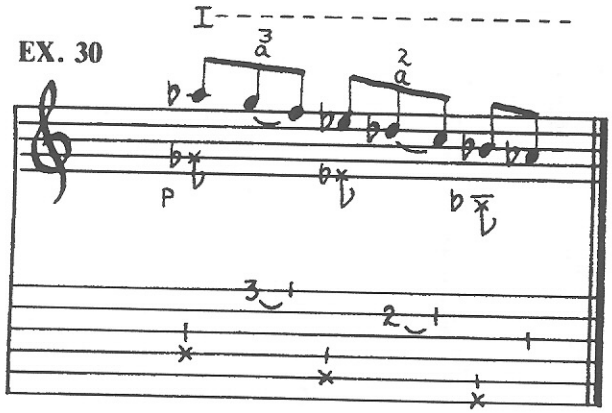
EX. 29 adds a pull-off (slur) to what we already have. Play a third string harmonic, sound F# on the first string, and then slur the F# to an open E. You should hear the first three notes in a descending G major scale.

EX. 29



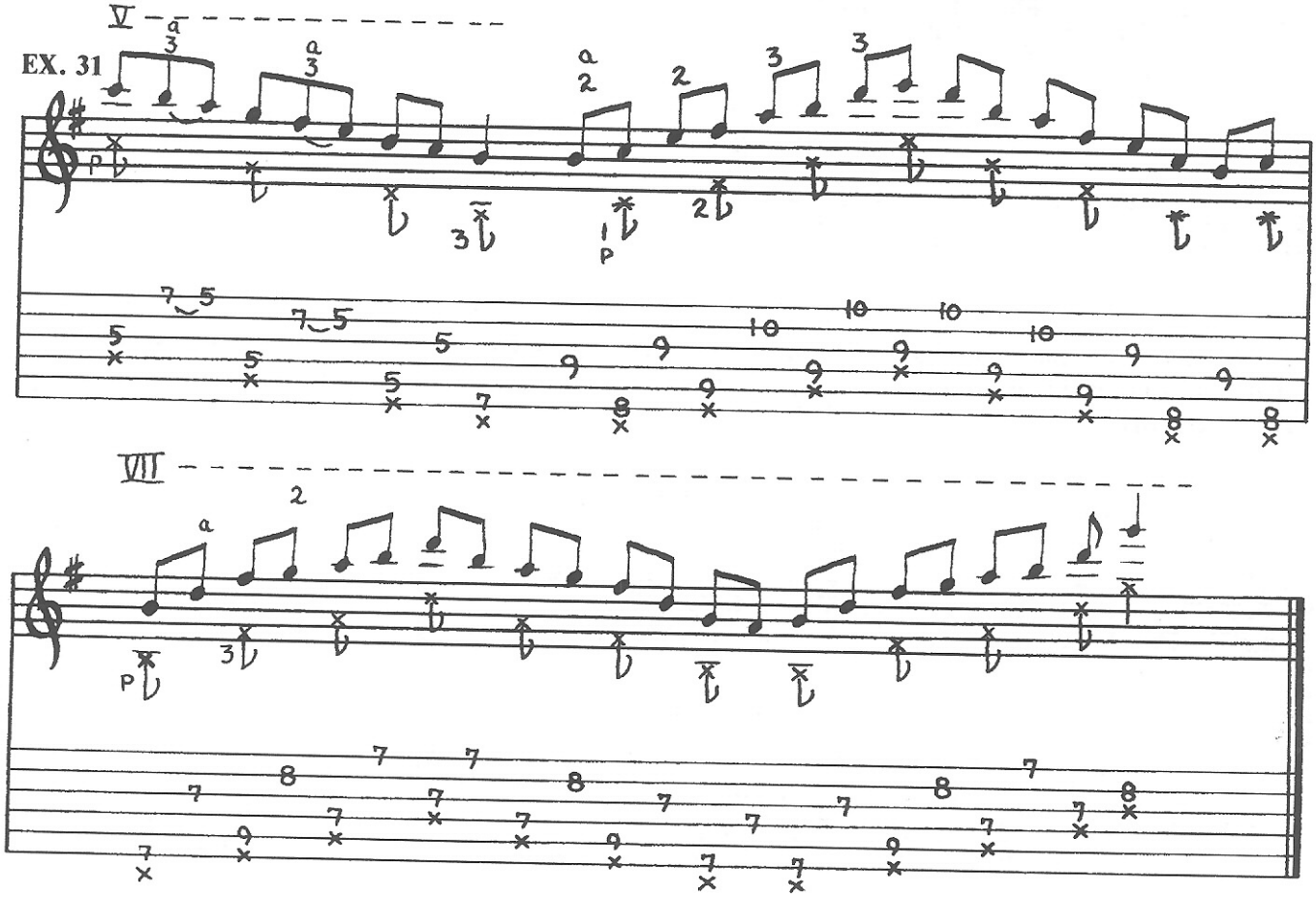
EX. 30 is EX. 29 with a barre. Again, make the harmonics by touching the string twelve frets above the fretted note.

EX. 30



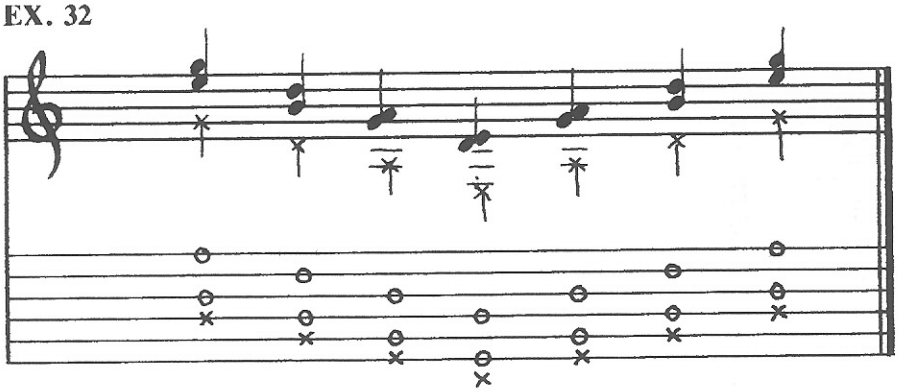
EX. 31 combines scales and arpeggios to imply a 2-5-1 progression in the key of G. Be sure you have mastered the skills in EX. 25 - EX. 30 before letting this one bring you to your knees.

EX. 31



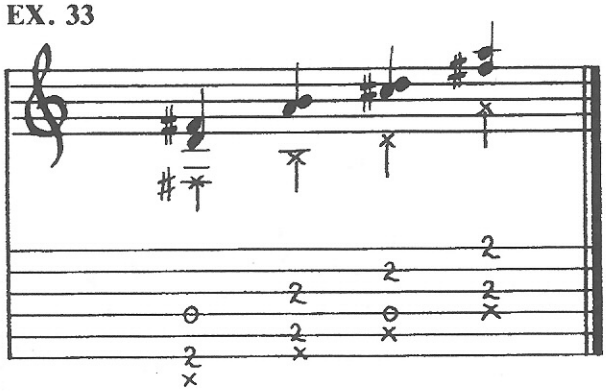
We have been sounding the harmonic and the regular note separately but they can be sounded together. This creates an inverted interval. In EX. 32, you would hear a major sixth (G below E) without the harmonic. The harmonic raises the G above the E to sound a minor third.

EX. 32



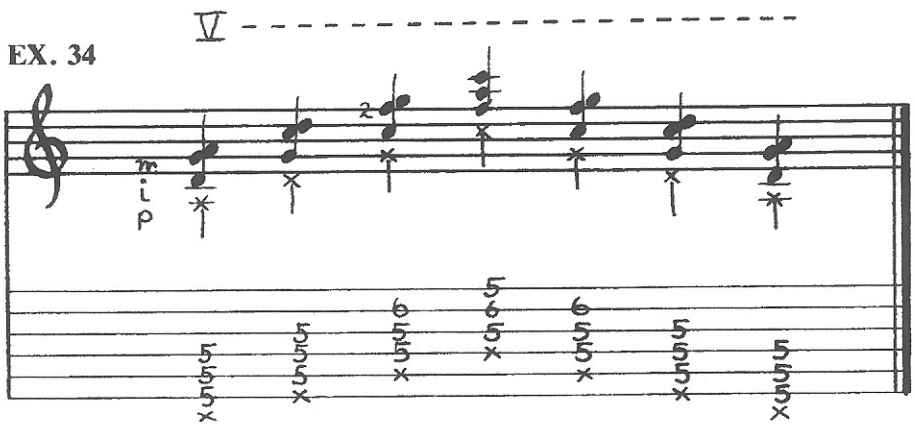
L: I'll do a minor nine. . .

EX. 33



L: See what I'm doing is just playing a straight barre (at the fifth fret) and making an "F" chord. So that you've got your three on the bottom, and you've got six (on the fifth string) and your nine (on the fourth string).

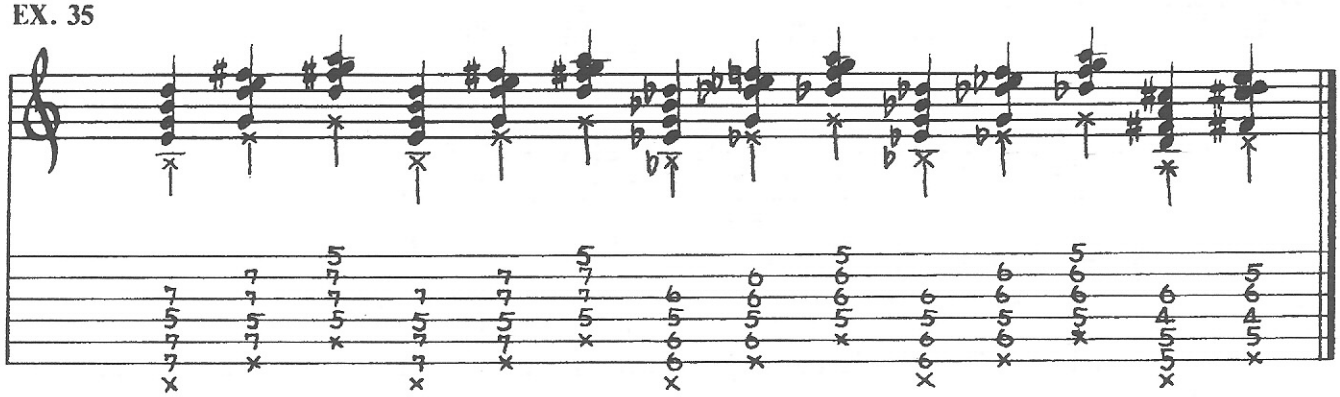
EX. 34



L: Here's some nice stuff here going into "D". . .

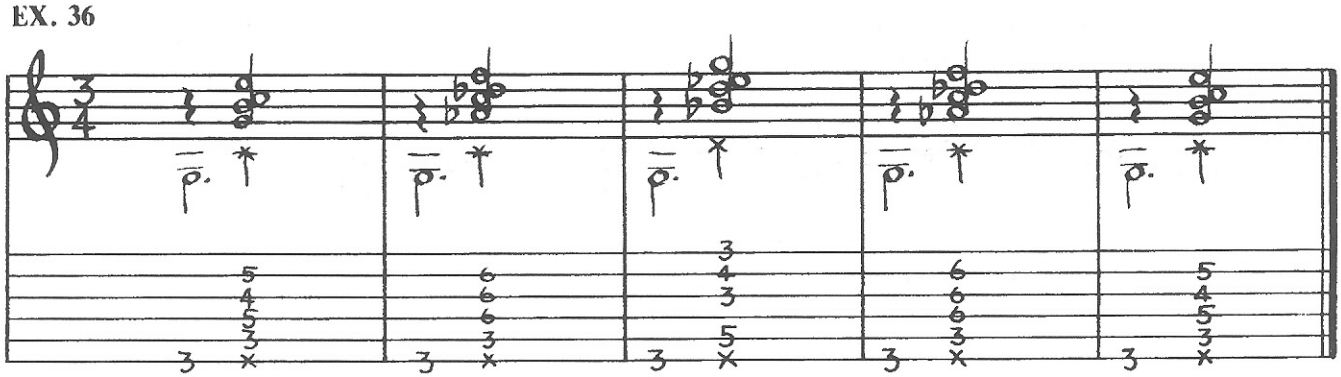
EX. 35 works as a 2-5-1 progression in the key of D. Each chord is one harmonic plus three fretted notes. You will have to get your right hand little finger into the act. The harmonic sounds as the second from the top note in the chord, creating a close voicing not normally heard on the guitar.

EX. 35



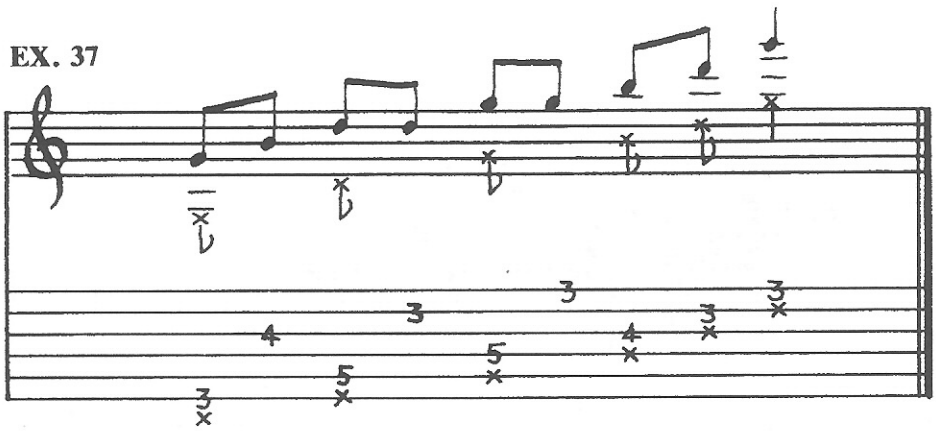
In EX. 36, Lenny is playing four note chords as in EX. 35 but he has added a G bass note that sustains under the progression. You will need to sound the sixth string with your thumb and then move into position to play the harmonic on the fifth string.

EX. 36



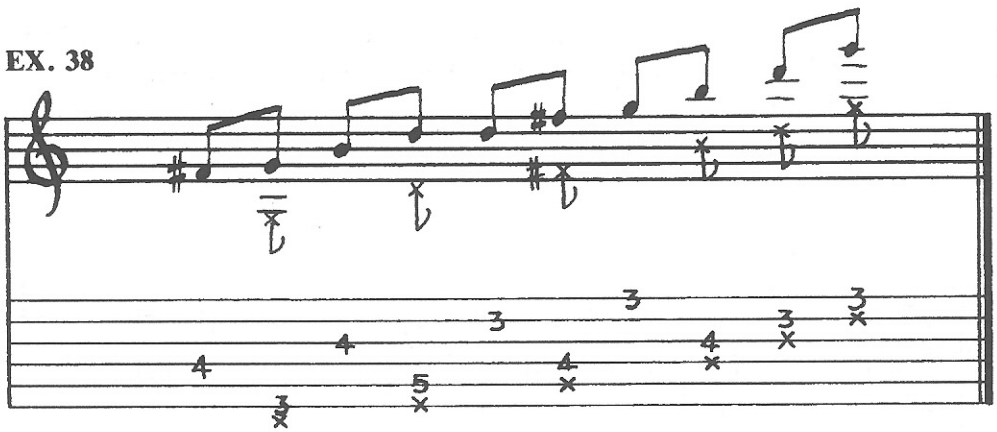
L: One thing about these harmonics. . . once you've got the pattern of it, you'll notice that it works on some chords and on some chords it don't work on and the chords it don't work on are real straight chords. If you were to play a "G" like this. . .

EX. 37



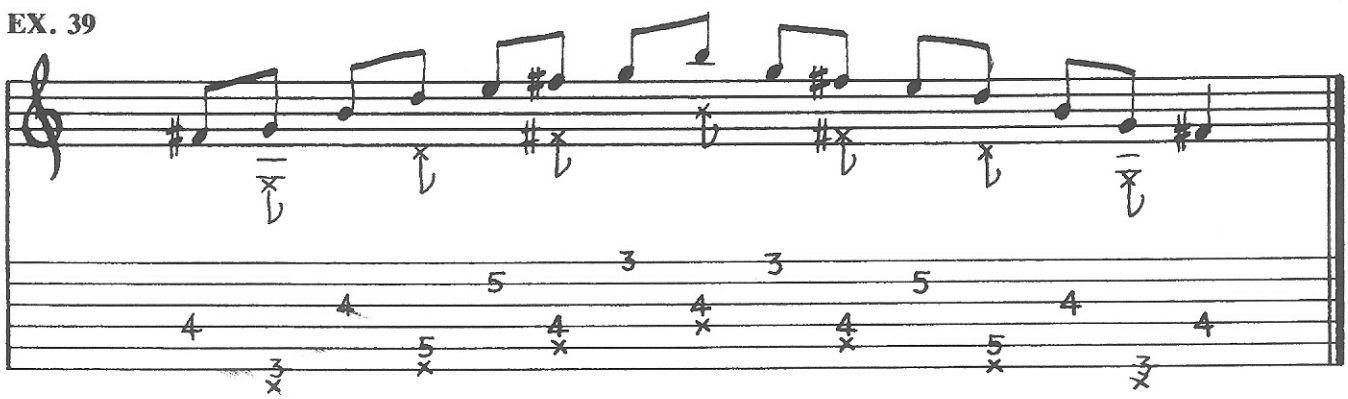
It's kind of a nice effect but what you want to try and do is at least get a Major 7th in there. So put the F# in there.

EX. 38



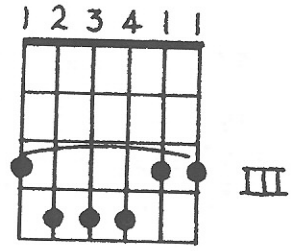
L: Oh, that won't work. . . this has to work. . .

EX. 39



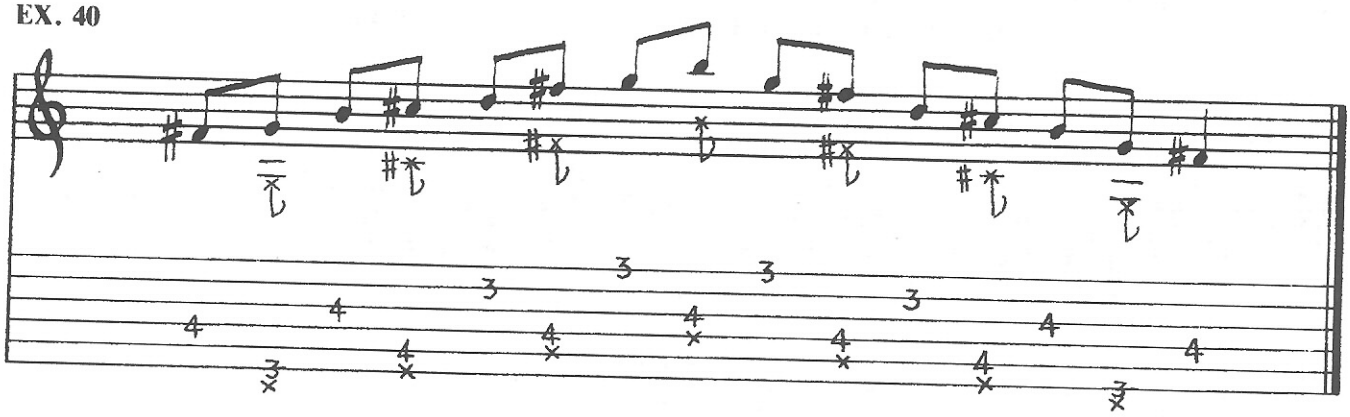
L: Gee, I've never played that one before. . . it's new isn't it. . . it's nice to discover a new one isn't it.

L: So what you've done is that you've altered the chord. You can do something interesting with just the plain "G" chord by lowering your Major 7th and lowering your 5th. Now lower would sound like this. . .



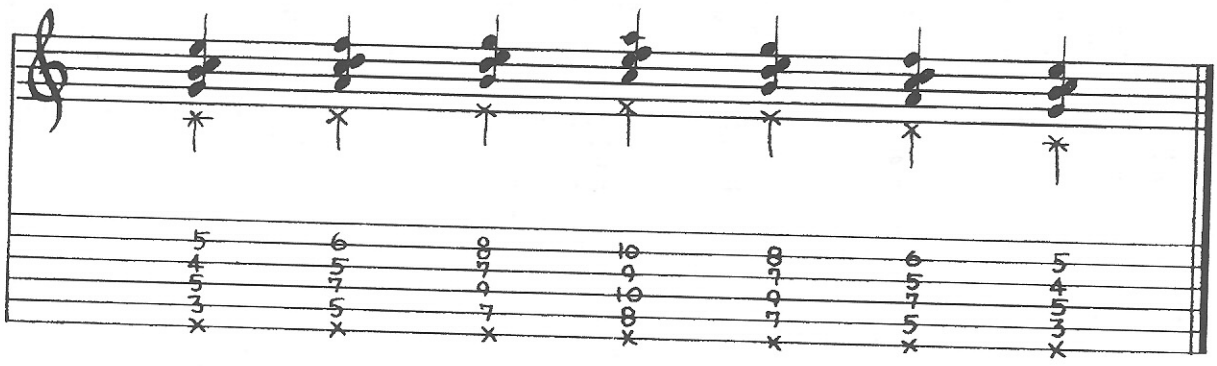
L: But now when you put the harmonics in, it sounds like. . .

EX. 40



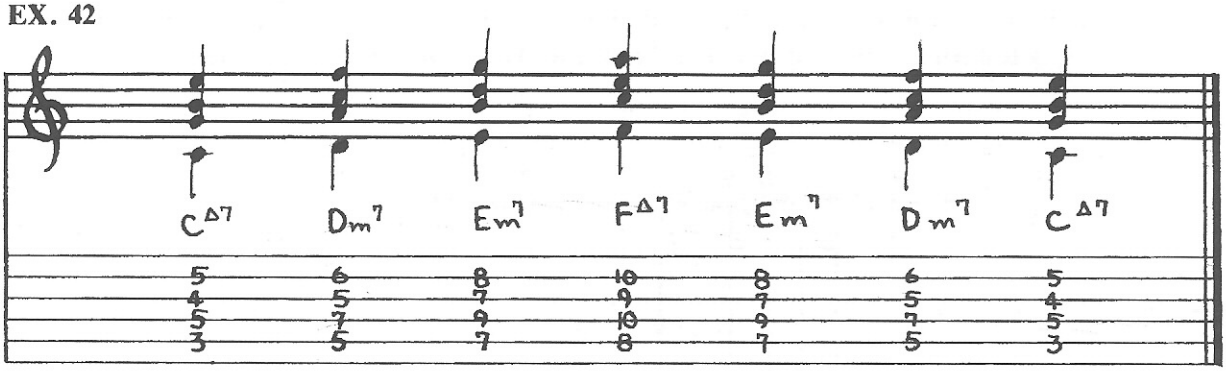
EX. 41 uses a major scale, harmonized with seventh chords. The root of each chord is a harmonic. These close voicings are difficult or impossible to finger without using the harmonic technique.

EX. 41



J: Now that's just this, isn't it?

EX. 42

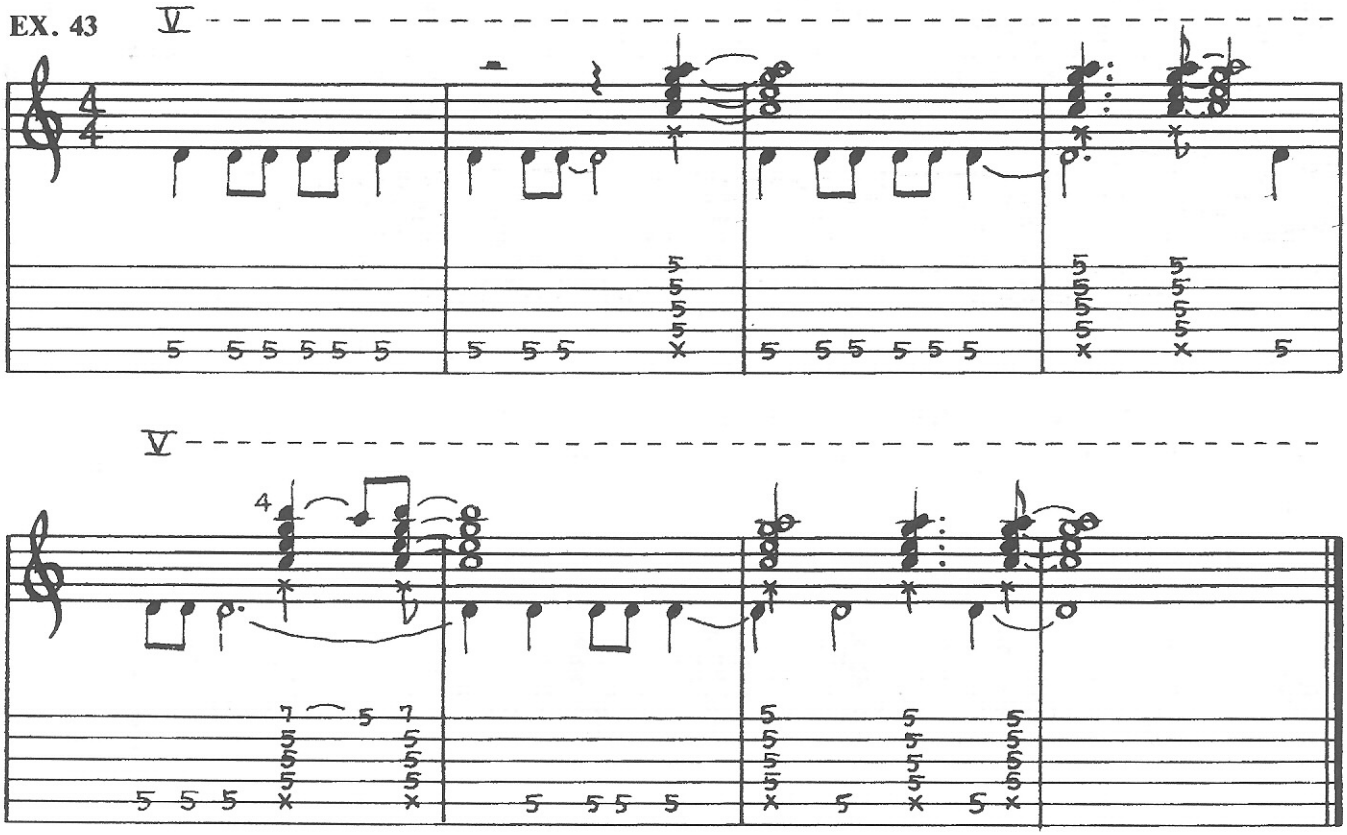


L: That's all it is.

J: And you're moving the roots up and putting them inside the chord.

L: Yeah. So it's a good way of getting your inversions. You'll find that you'll be able to get these inversions that would be very hard to reach. So see you can do things like this. . .

EX. 43

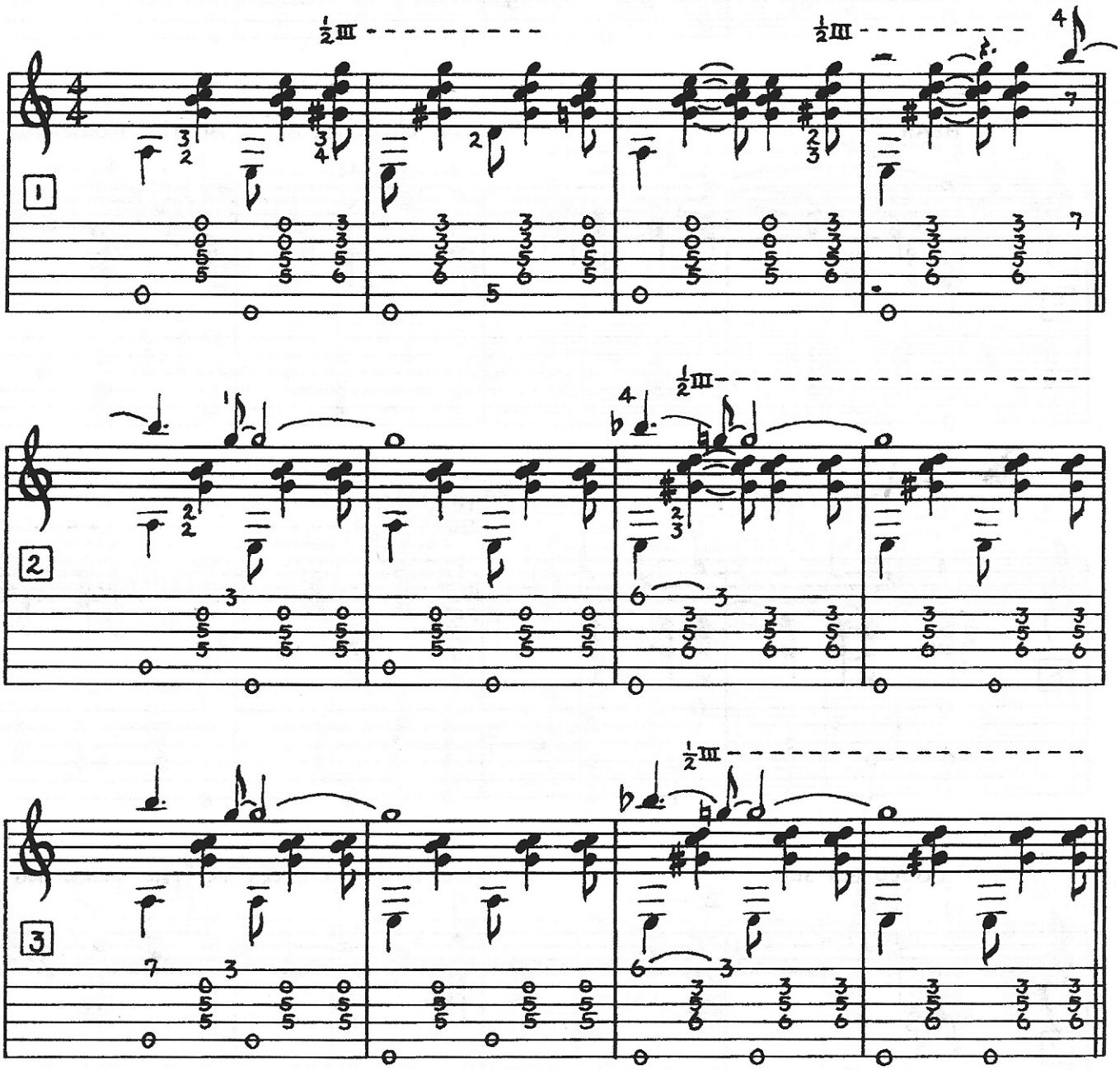


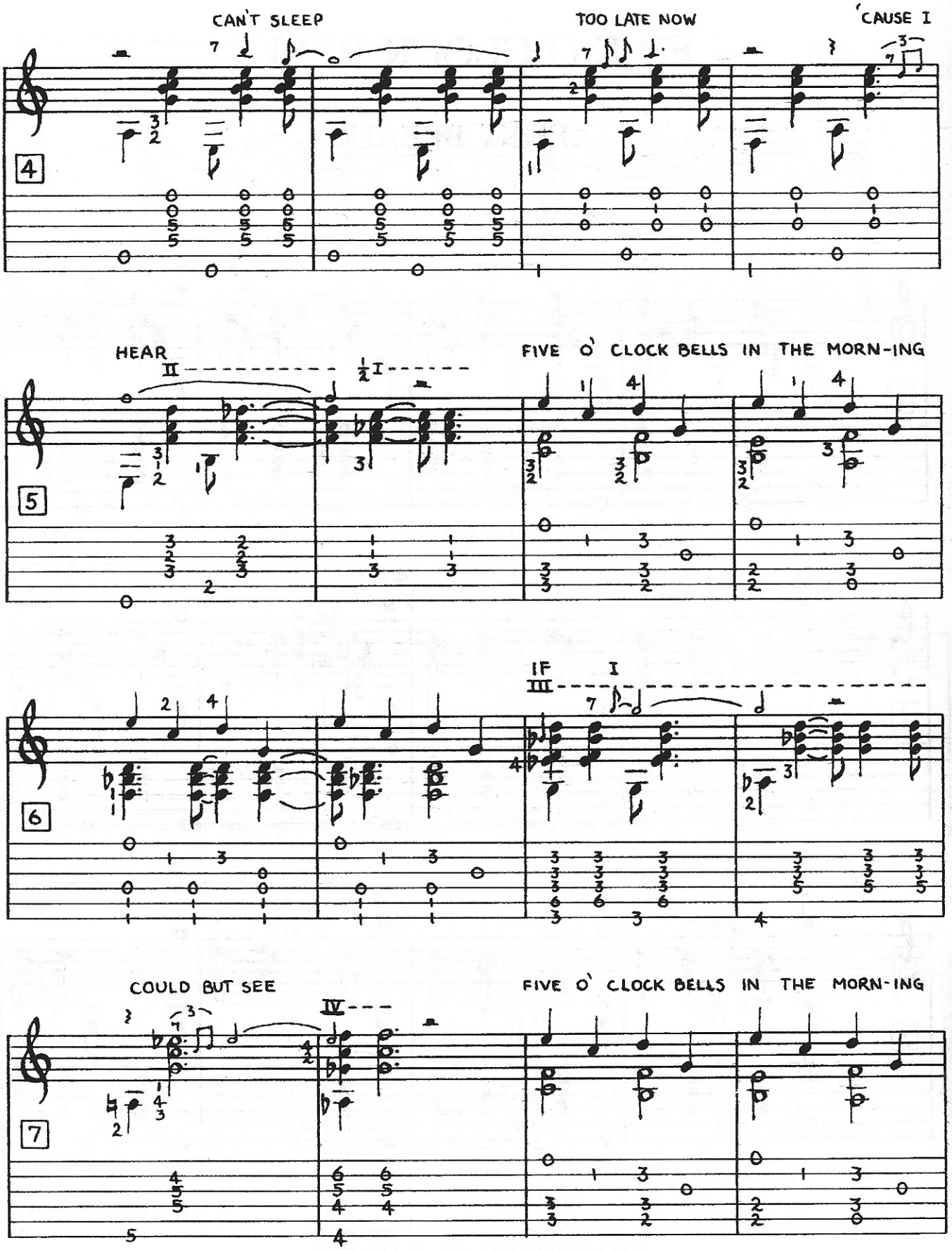
J: Let's call it a night.

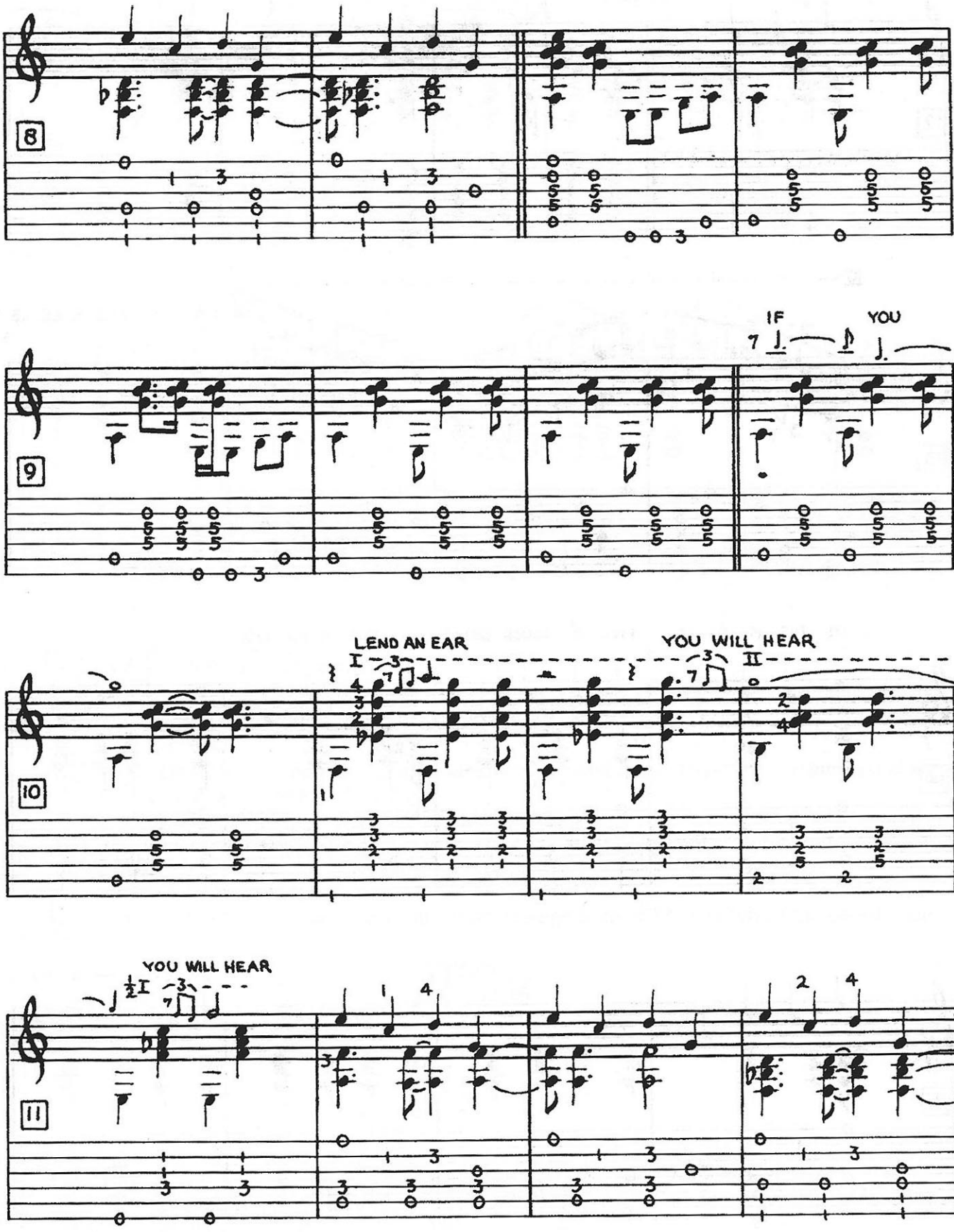
L: You want to call it a night? Crazy.

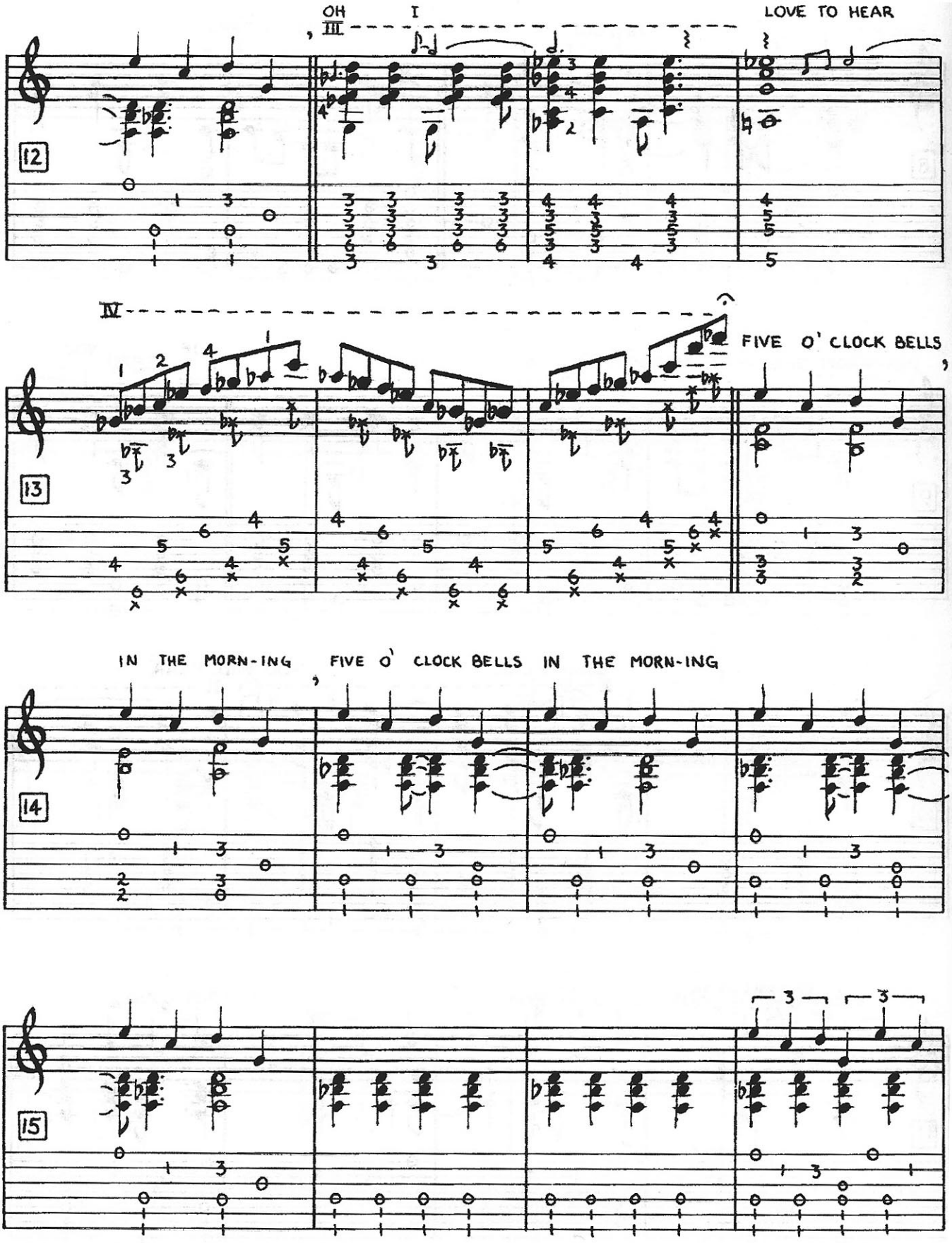
FIVE O'CLOCK BELLS

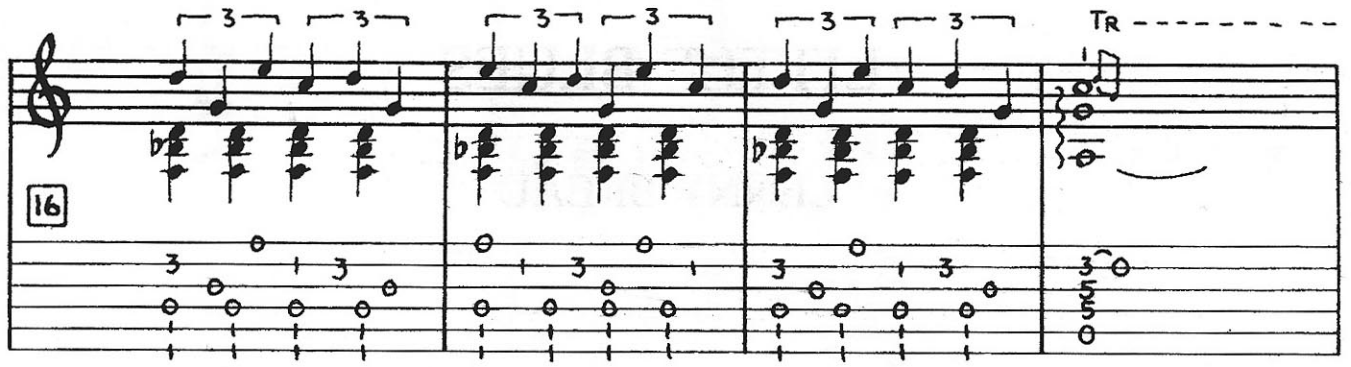
LENNY BREAU

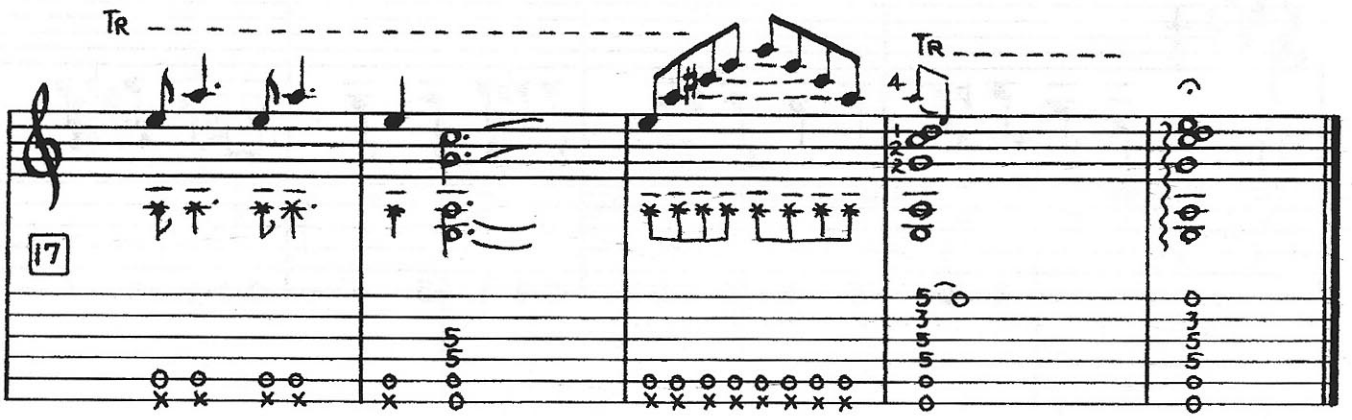



CAN'T SLEEP
TOO LATE NOW
'CAUSE I
4
HEAR
II
½I
FIVE O' CLOCK BELLS IN THE MORN-ING
5
IF
I
III
6
COULD BUT SEE
IV
FIVE O' CLOCK BELLS IN THE MORN-ING
7


8
9
IF
YOU
10
LEND AN EAR
YOU WILL HEAR
11
YOU WILL HEAR


OH I LOVE TO HEAR
III
12
IV
FIVE O' CLOCK BELLS
13
IN THE MORN-ING FIVE O' CLOCK BELLS IN THE MORN-ING
14
3 3
15





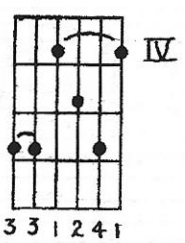
FIVE O'CLOCK BELLS

1 Let the chords ring into each other. Listen to Lenny's recording.

2 In the first bar, second beat, Lenny flattens his second finger to fret two strings. He does the same thing in line 6, first bar.

4 The small (cue) notes are the notes that Lenny sings. In line 5, Lenny sings the same notes that he plays.

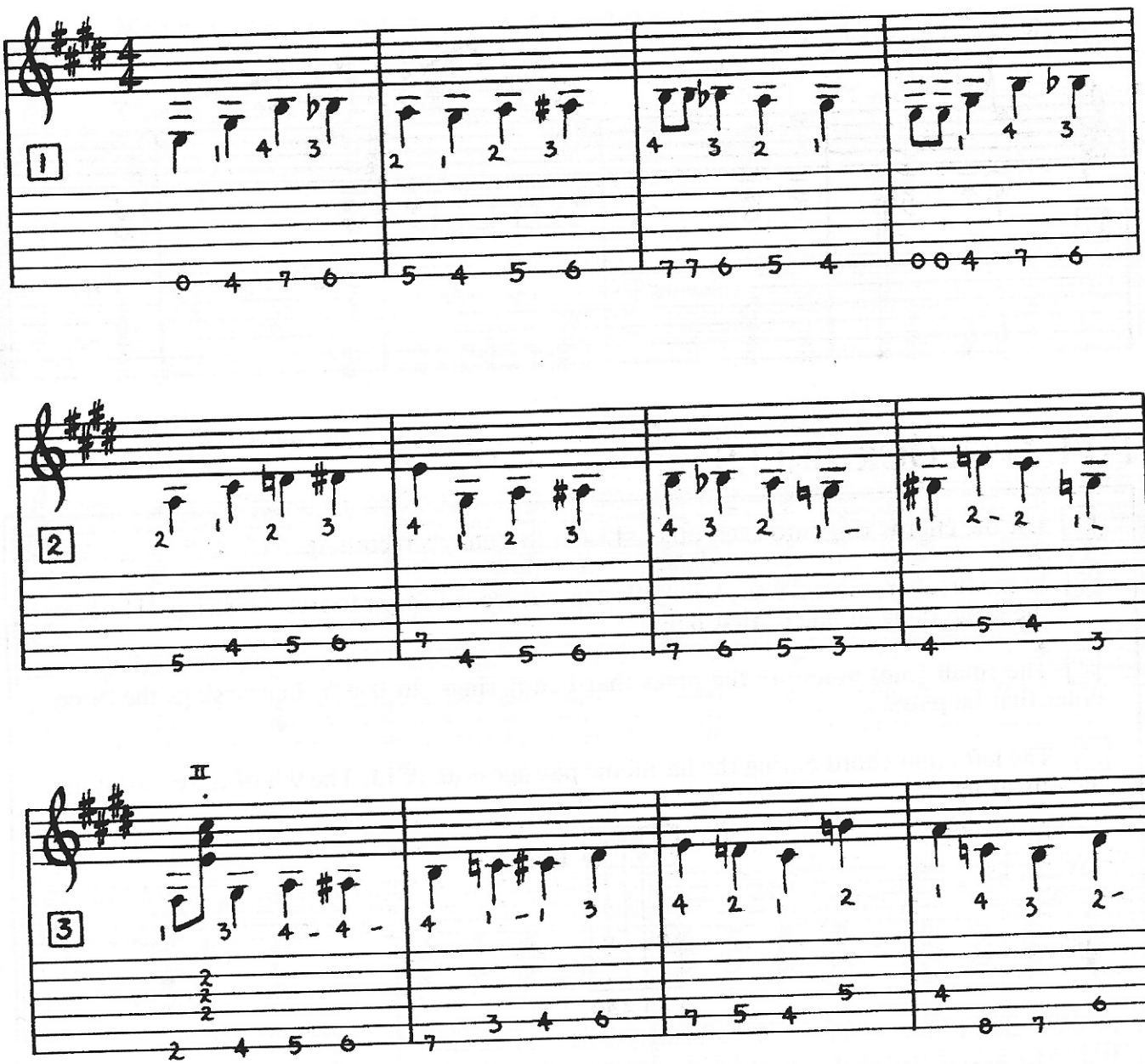
13 The left hand chord during the harmonic passage is an A♭13. The 9th of the chord is on the 6th string.

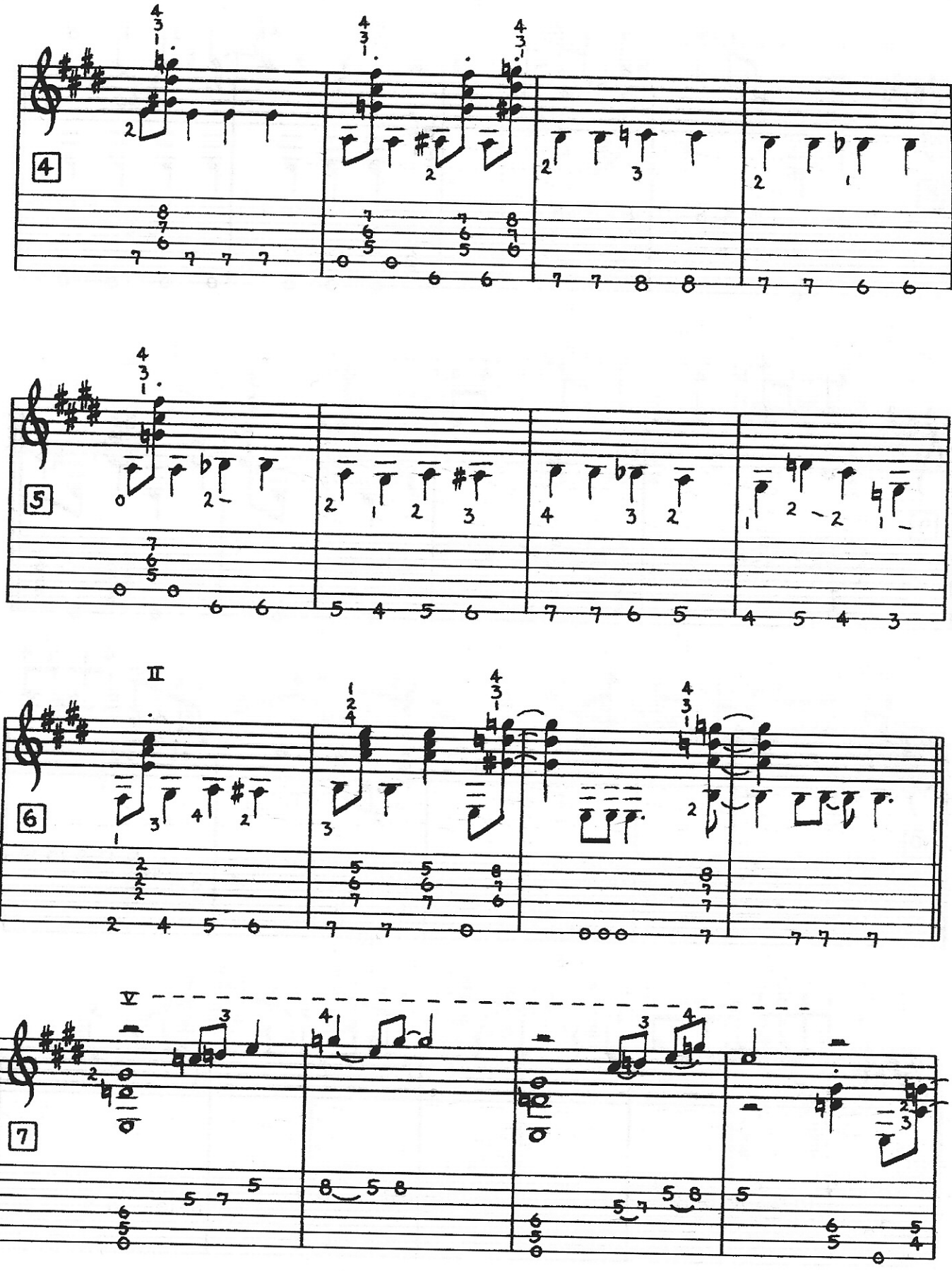


17 The harmonics in the third bar are all played on the open 5th string. Touch the string, with your right index finger, at the 7th, 5th, 4th, 3rd and midway between the 2nd and 3rd strings. Experiment to find the exact spot.

LITTLE BLUES

LENNY BREAU

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II
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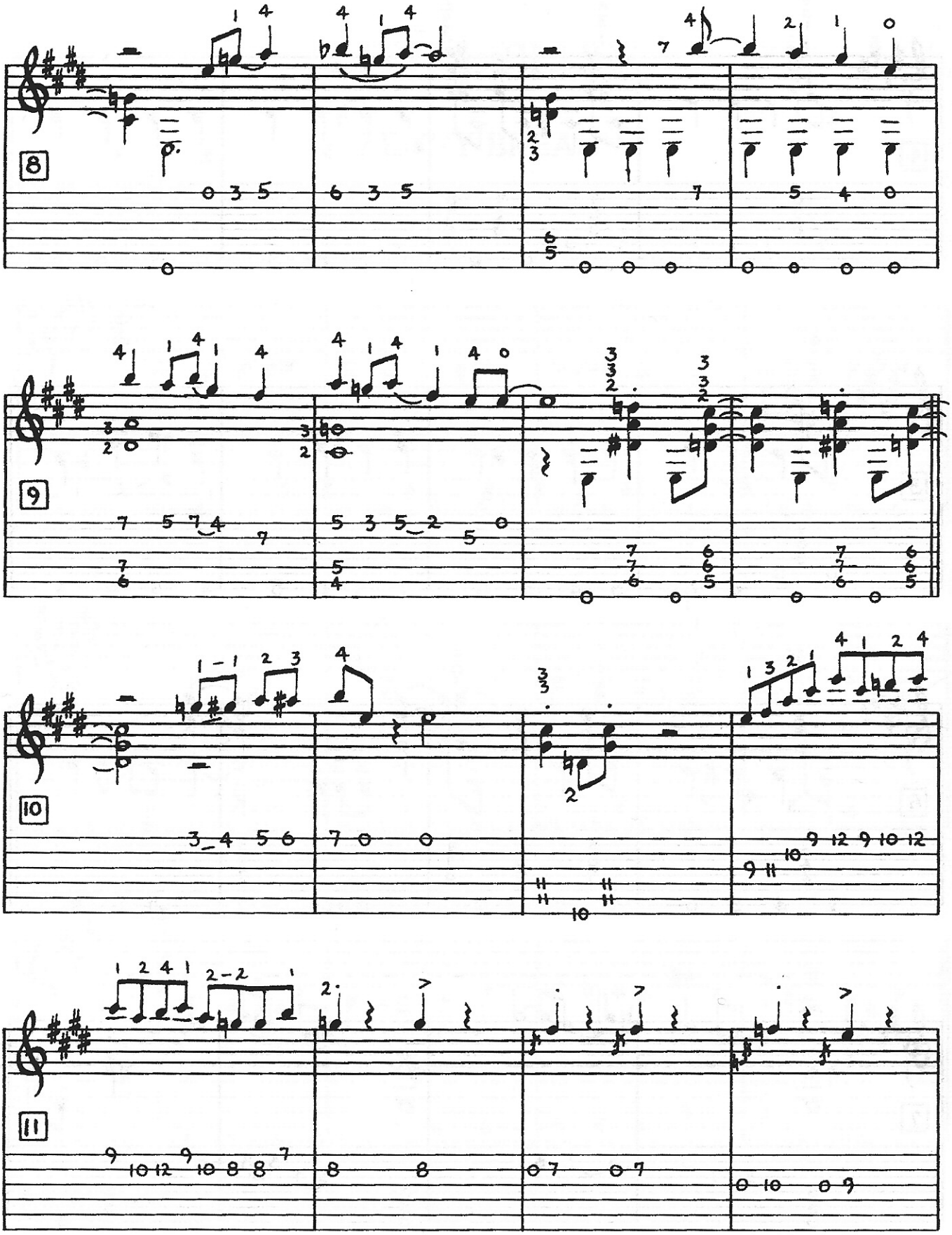
V
7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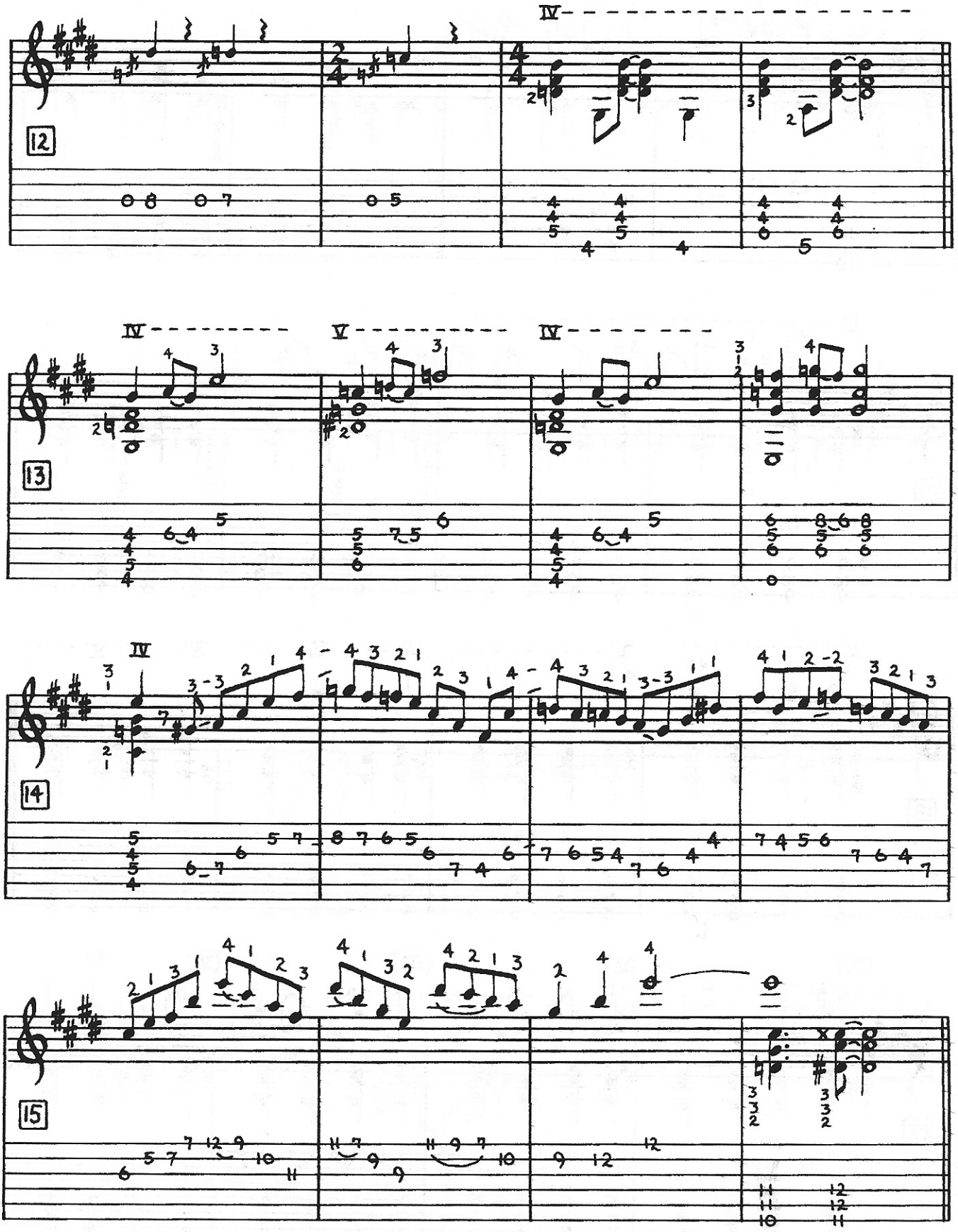
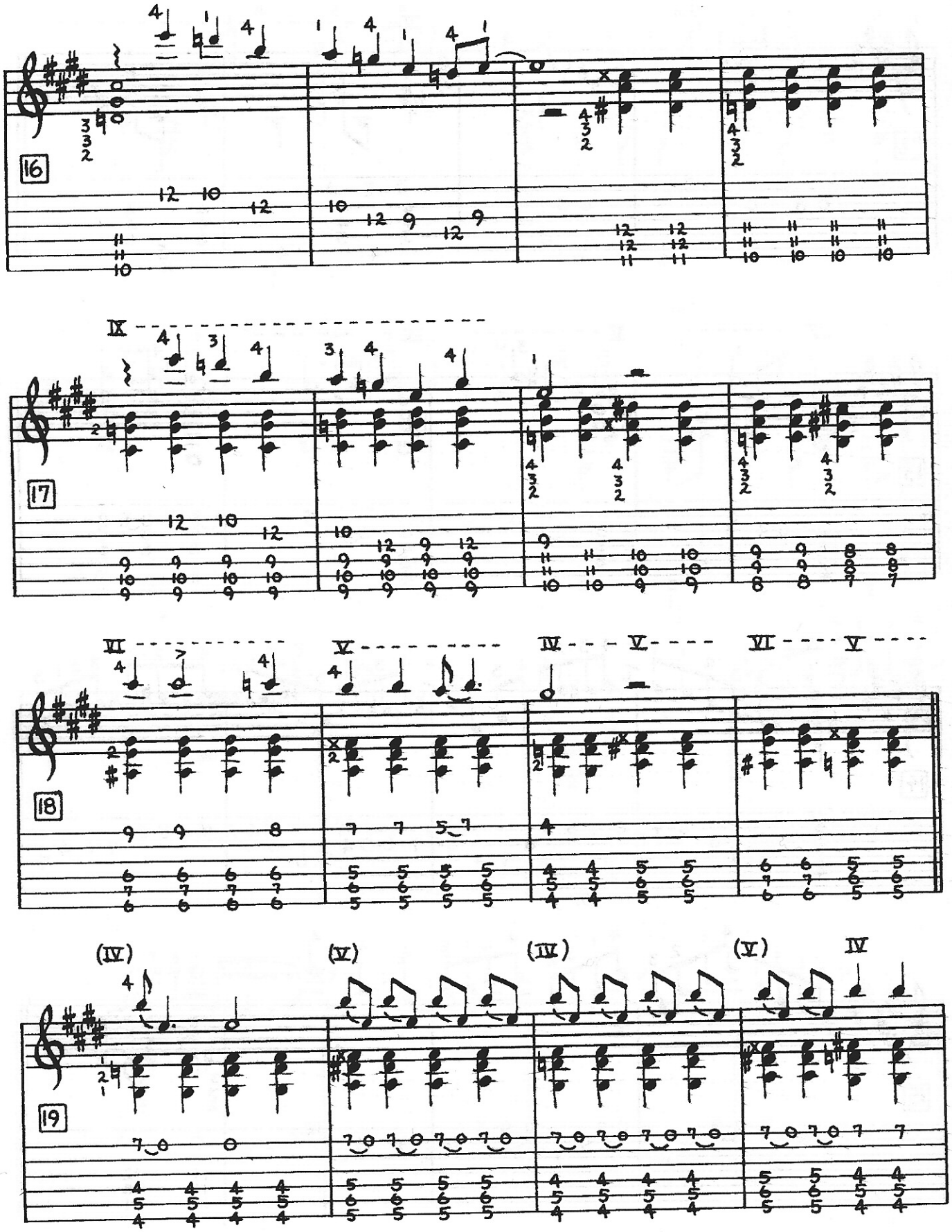

IV
12
IV
V
IV
13
IV
14
15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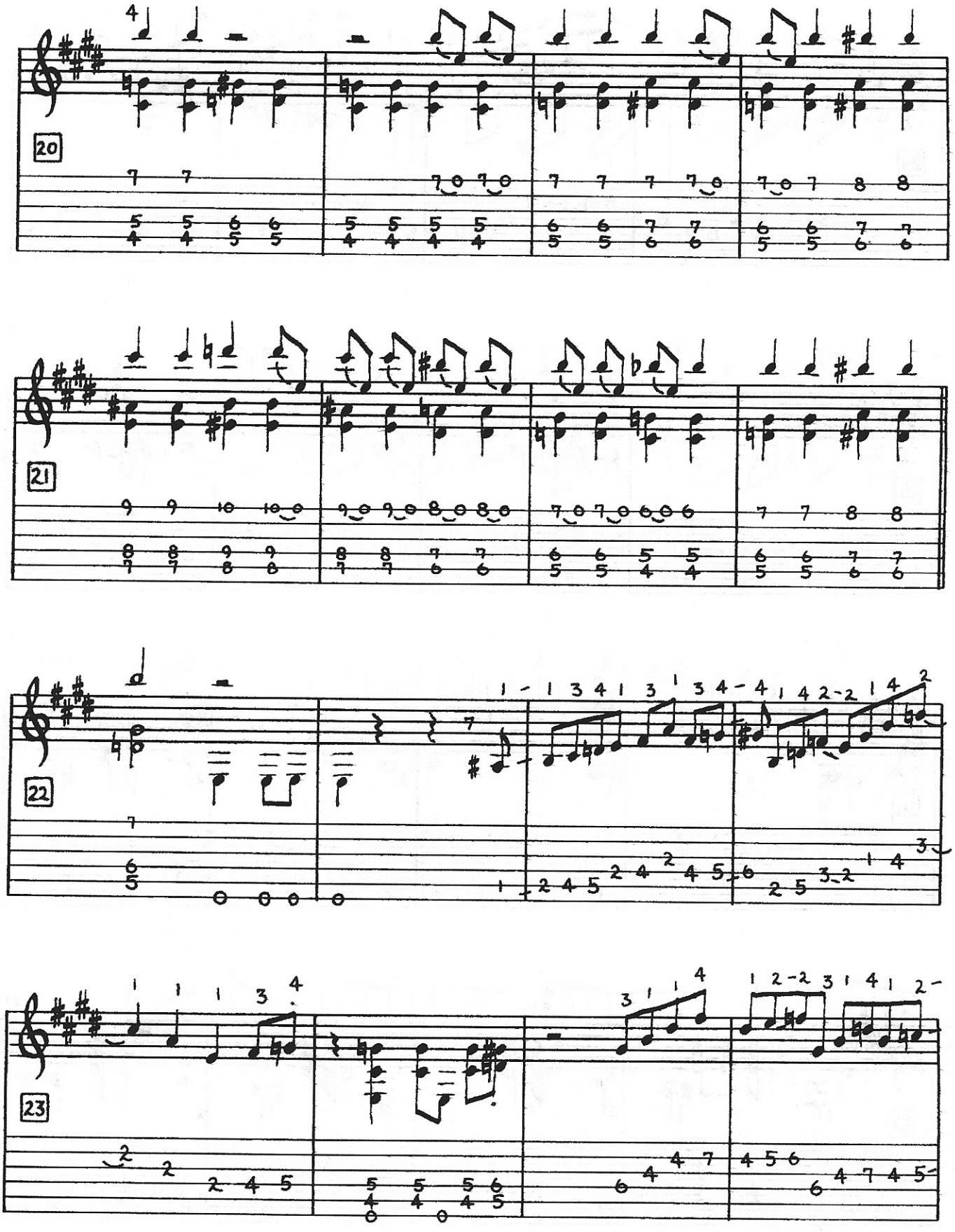
20
21
22
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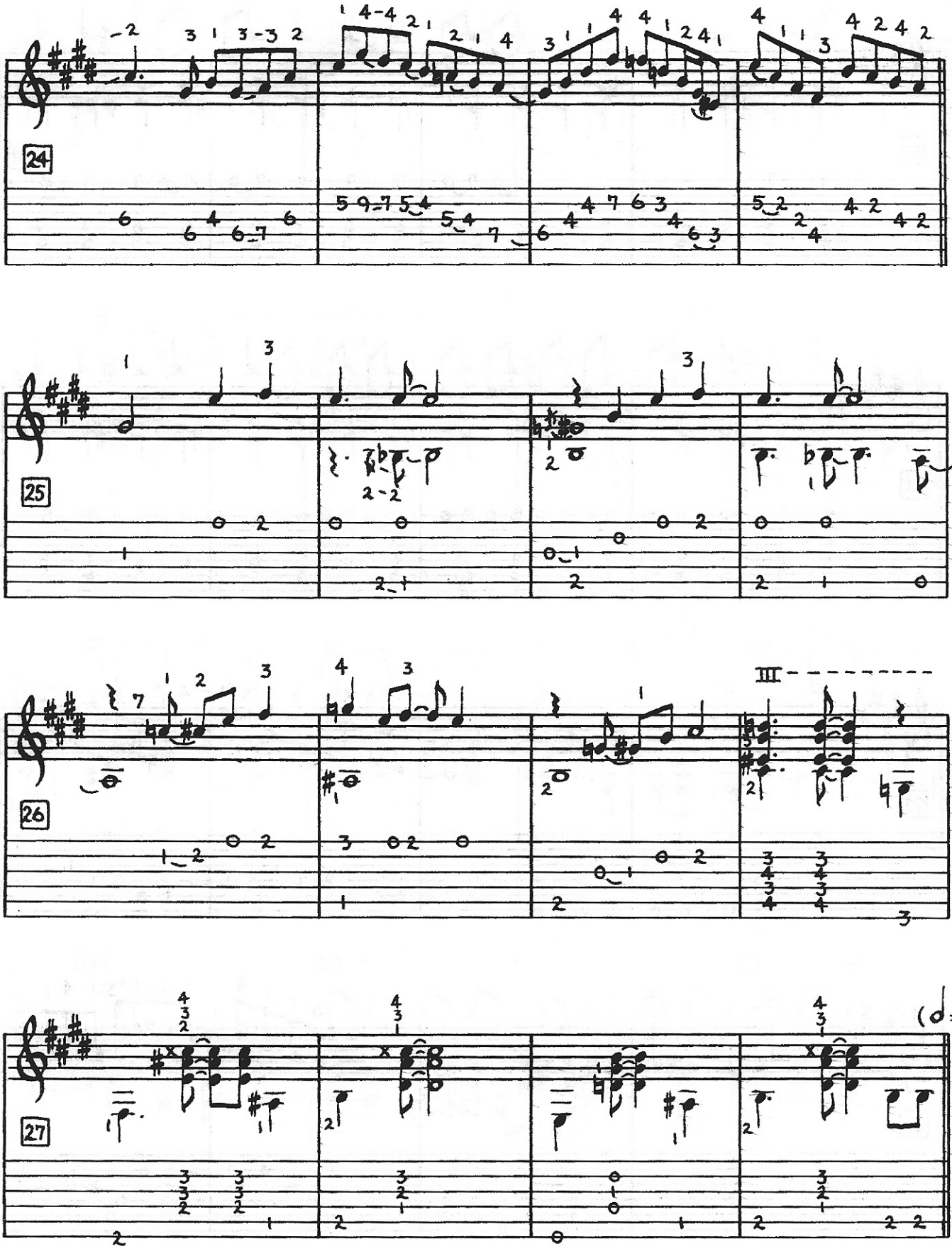
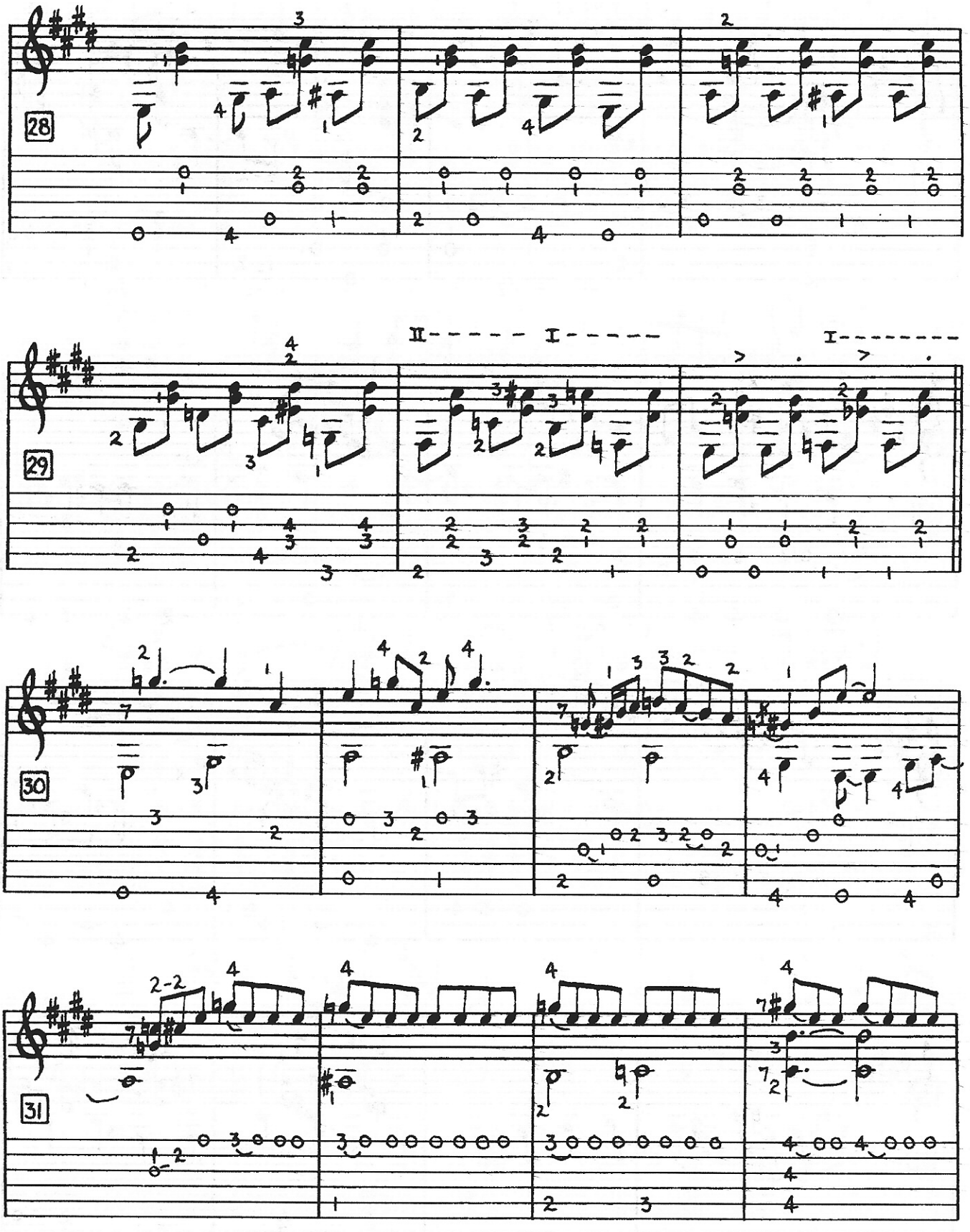

24
25
26
III
27
(♩=♩)


28
29
II----- I-----
I--------
30
2-2
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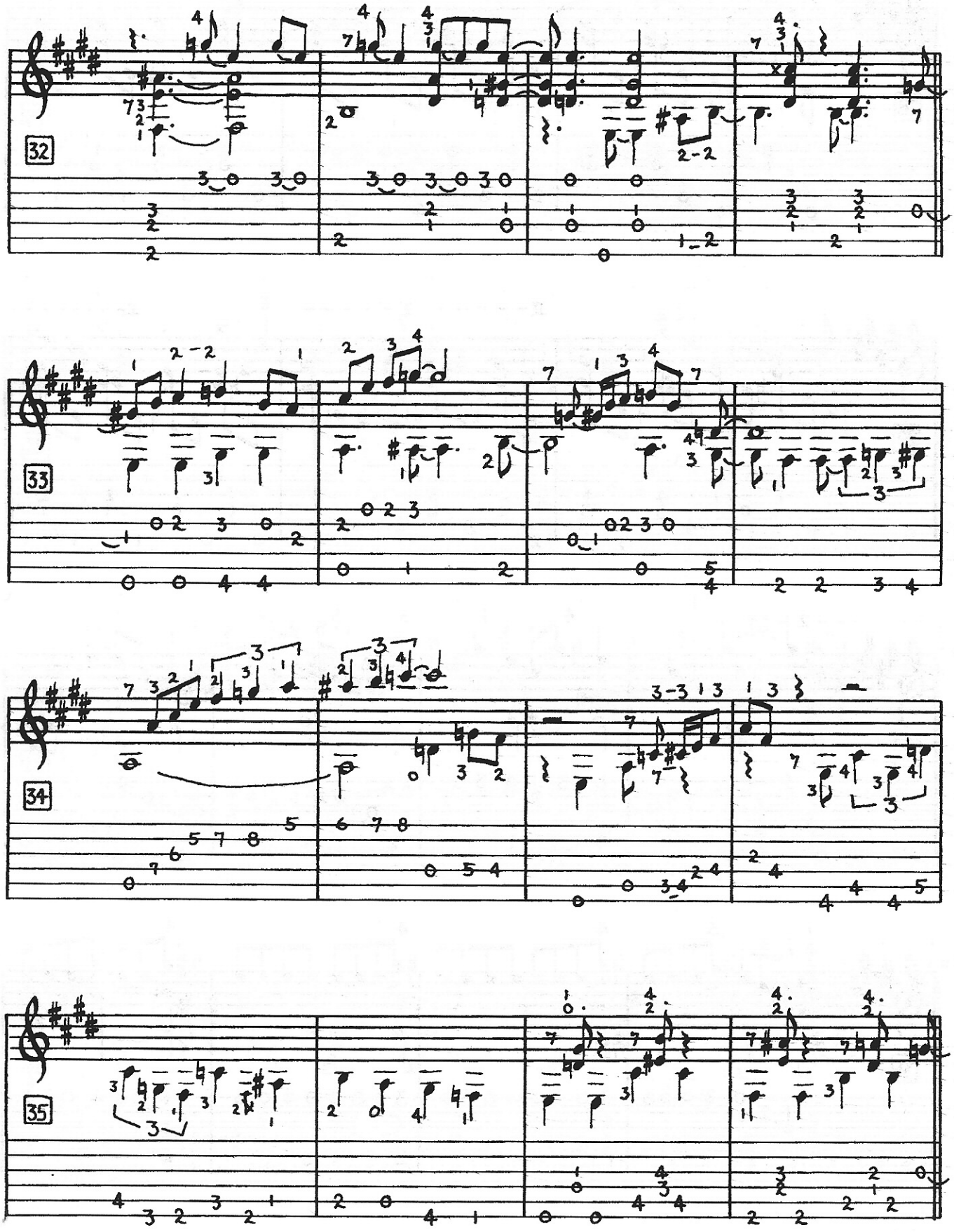
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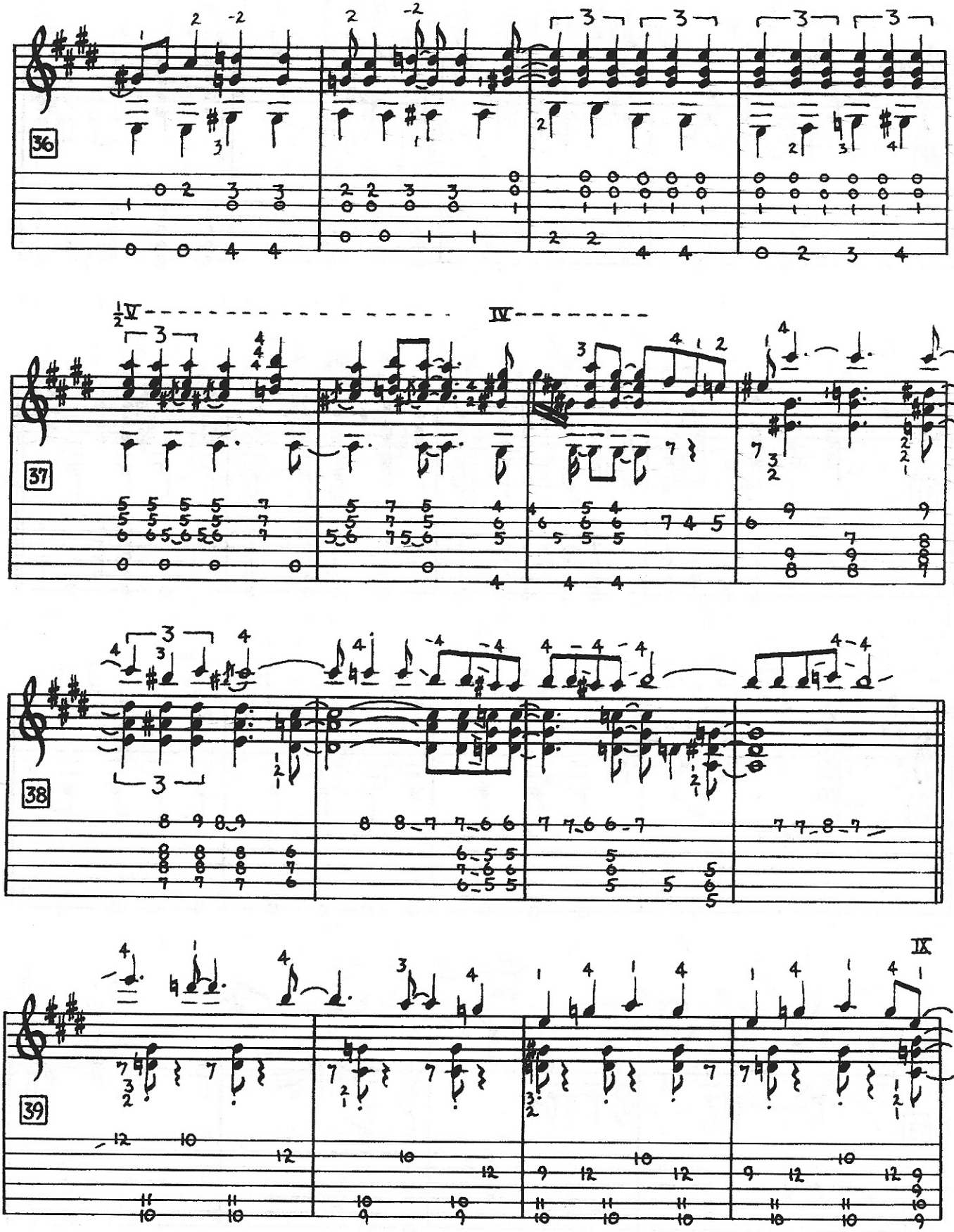
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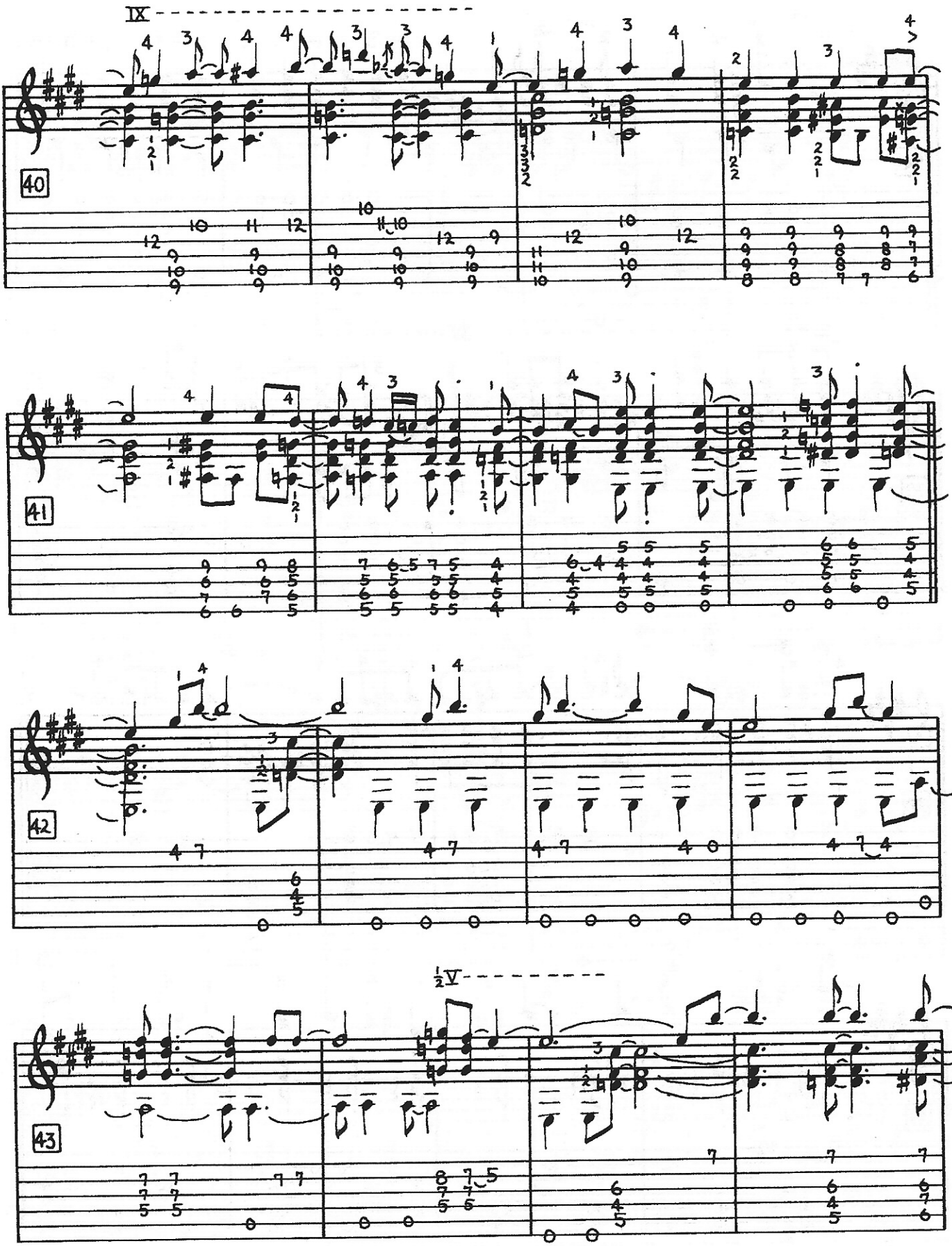
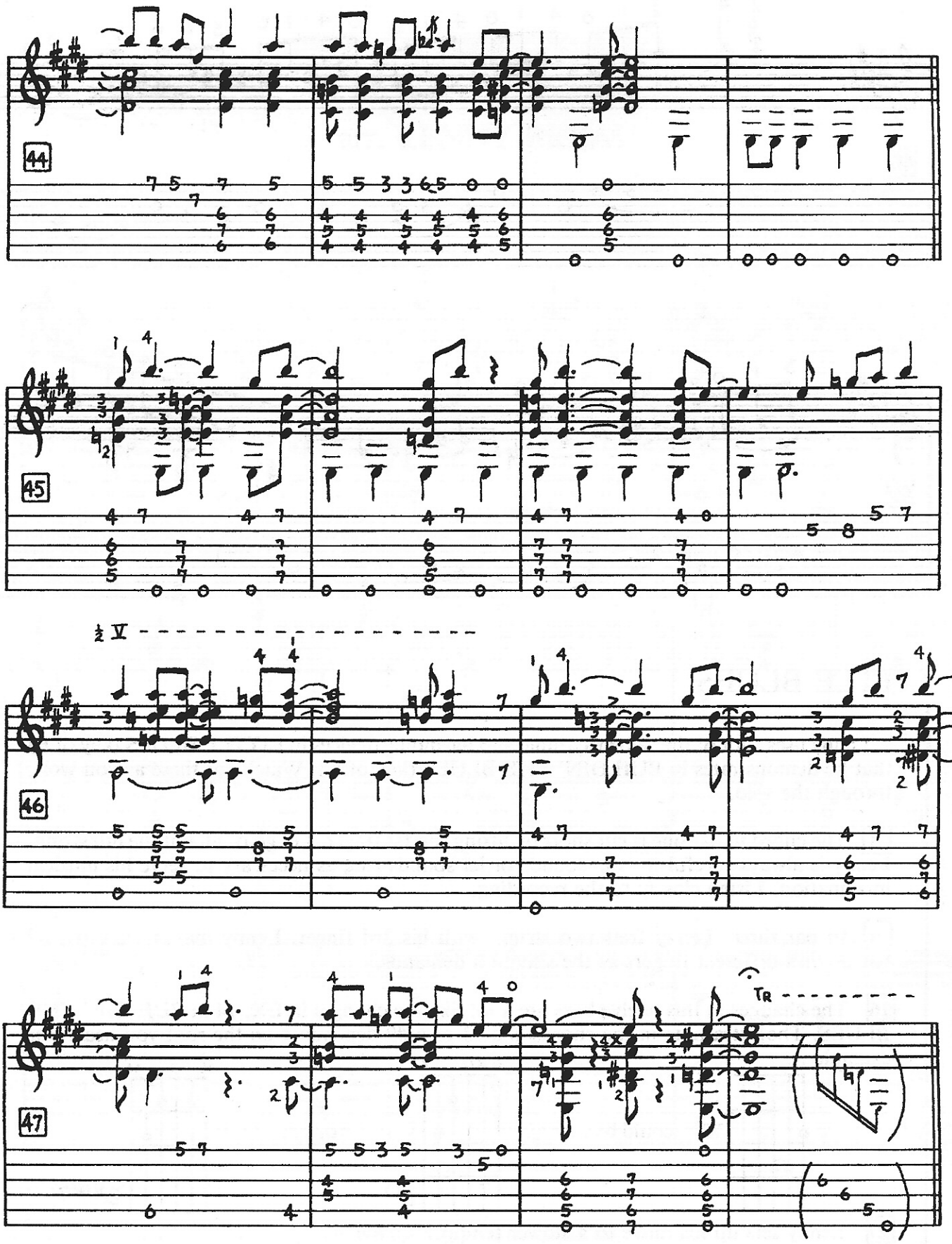
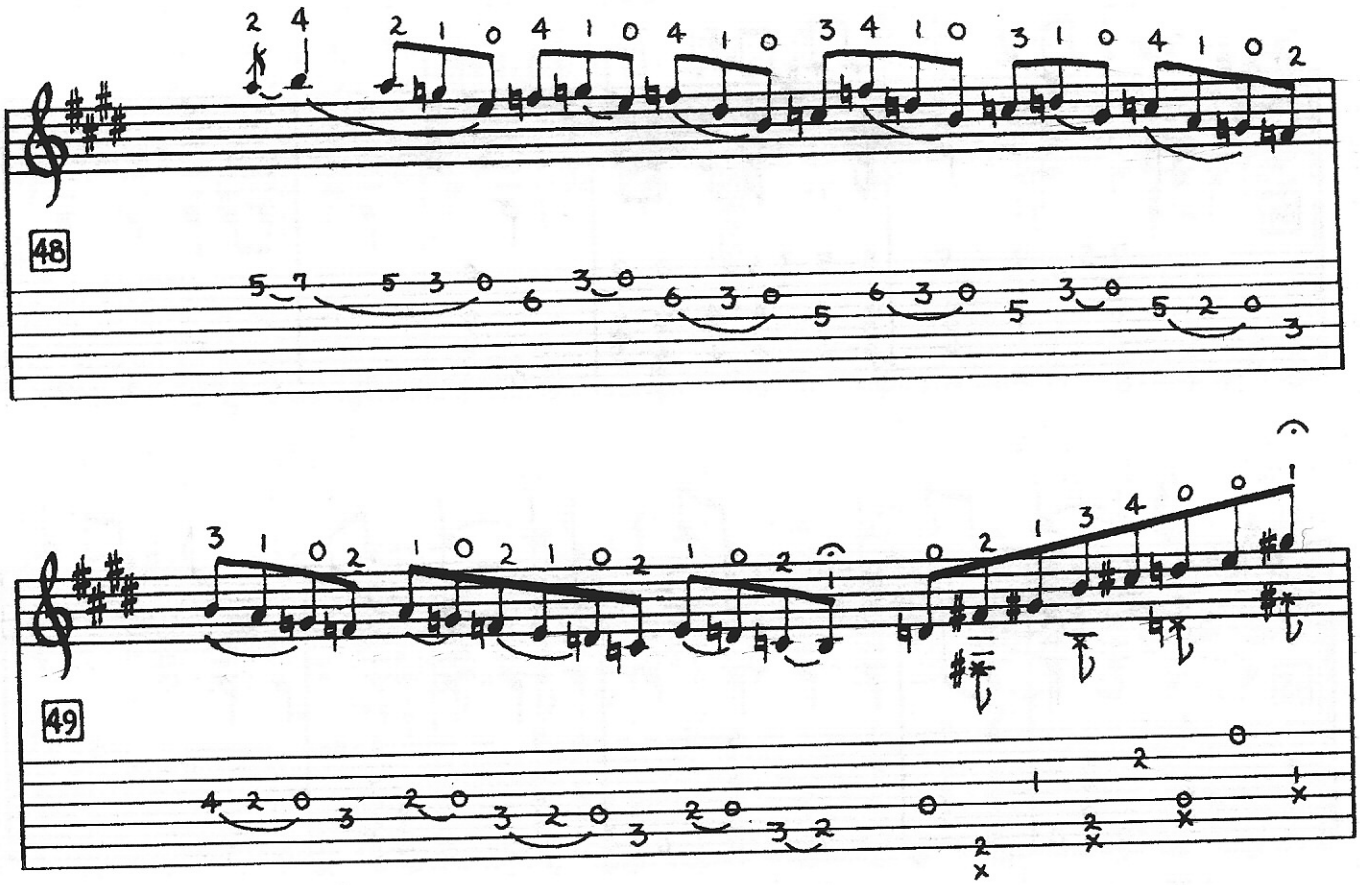

IX
40
41
42
½V
43


44
45
½ V
46
47
TR



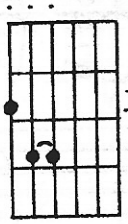
LITTLE BLUES

Lenny uses a lot of the same rhythmic and harmonic devices in LITTLE BLUES (key of E) that he demonstrates in BUILDIN' THE BLUES (key of C). Watch for these as you work through the solo.

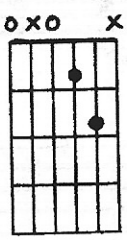
3 The chord in bar one is cut short by lifting the 1st finger. Let go of all but the 6th string. Lenny is always careful to stop sounds or let sounds ring as necessary to serve his musical imagination. Listen closely to the recording.

9 In bar three, Lenny frets two strings with his 3rd finger. Lenny makes these partial barres with different fingers as the situation demands.

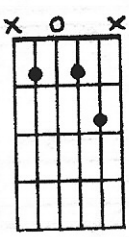
16 The changes in this twelve bars are a lot like the changes in EX. 14 in BUILDIN' THE BLUES. The extra note in the chords is a 13 or a #9 depending on the root you hear. For example . . .



could be . . .



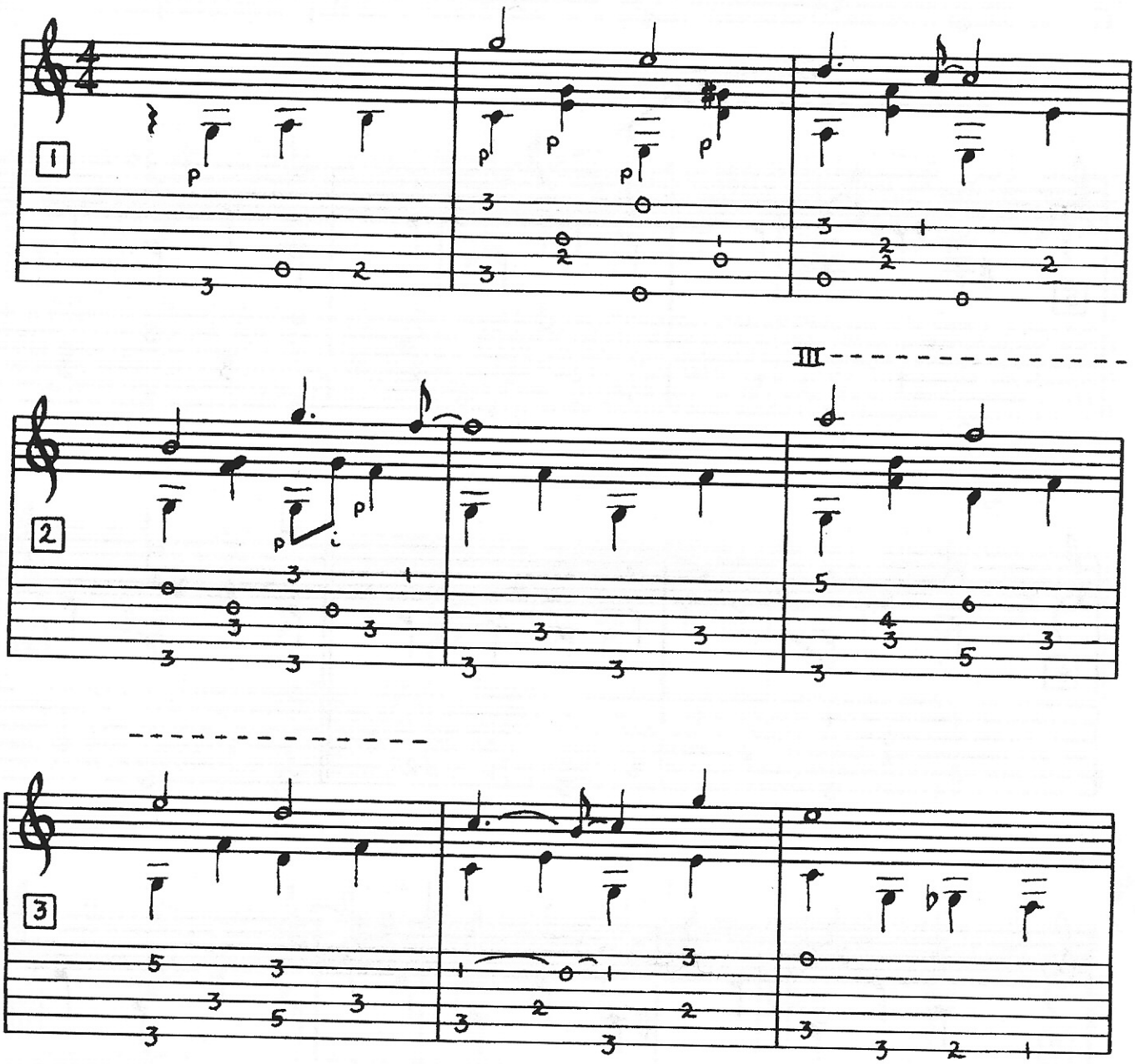
or . . .

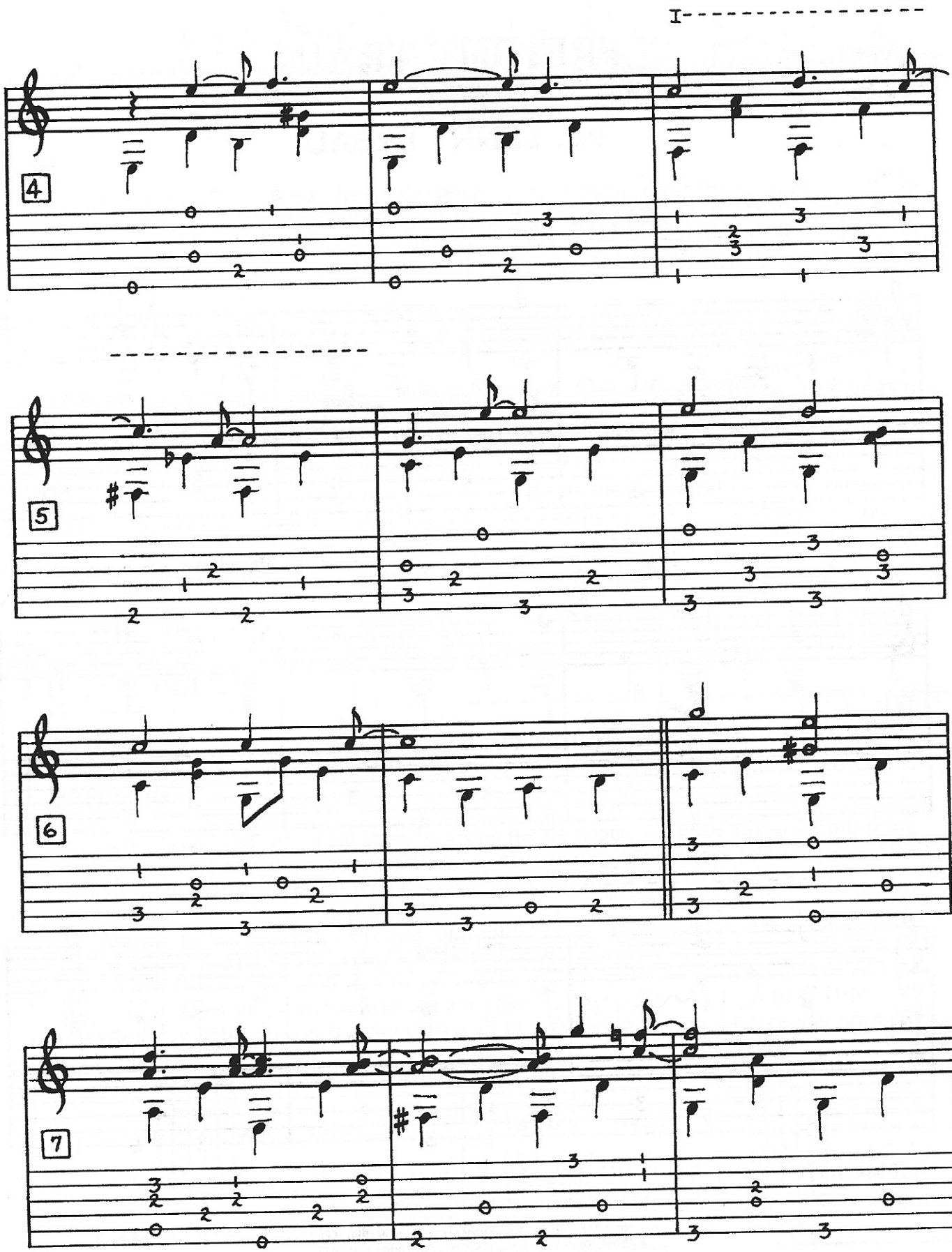


27 Lenny sets up his move to a slower tempo.

FREIGHT TRAIN

arr. LENNY BREAU




I
4
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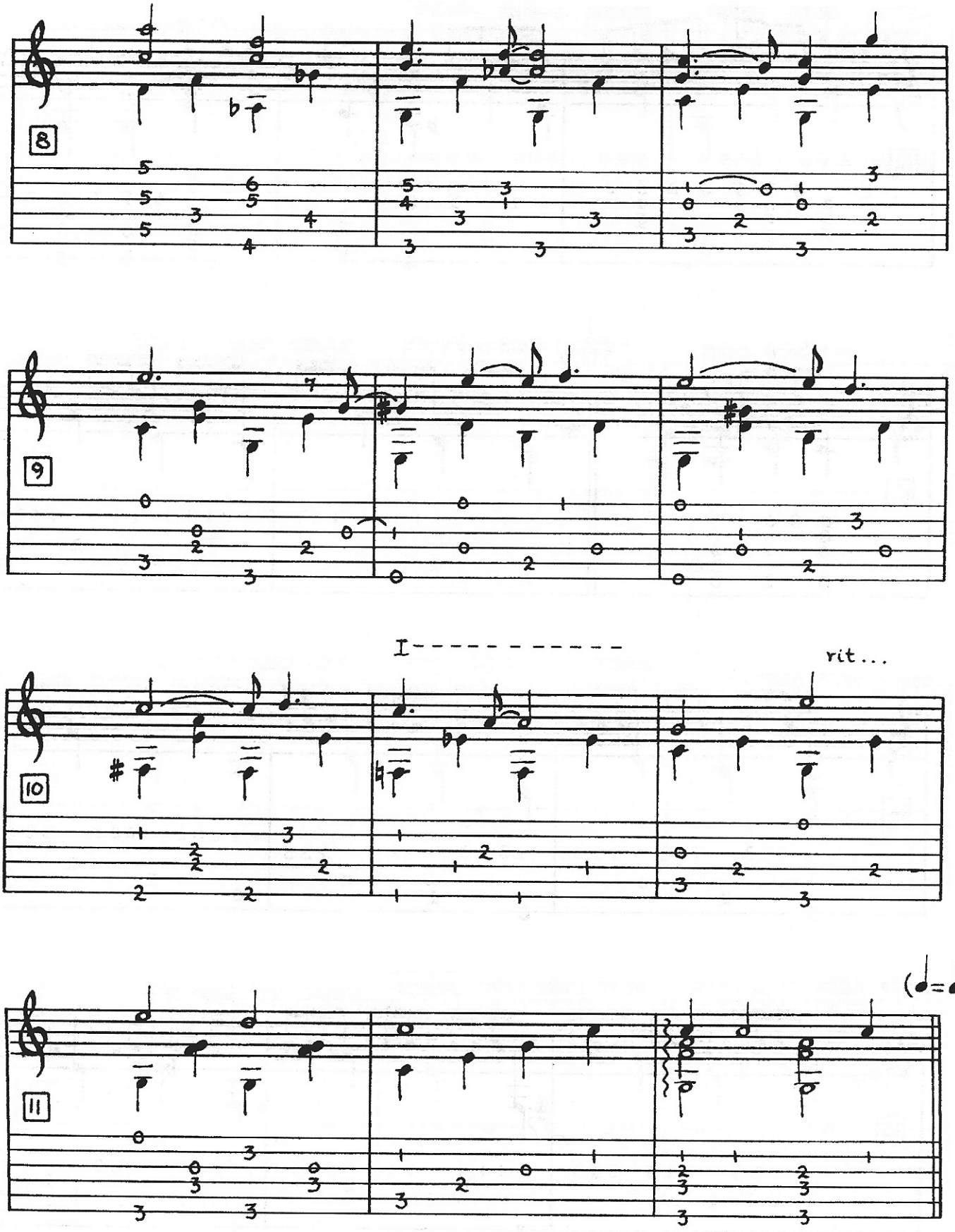
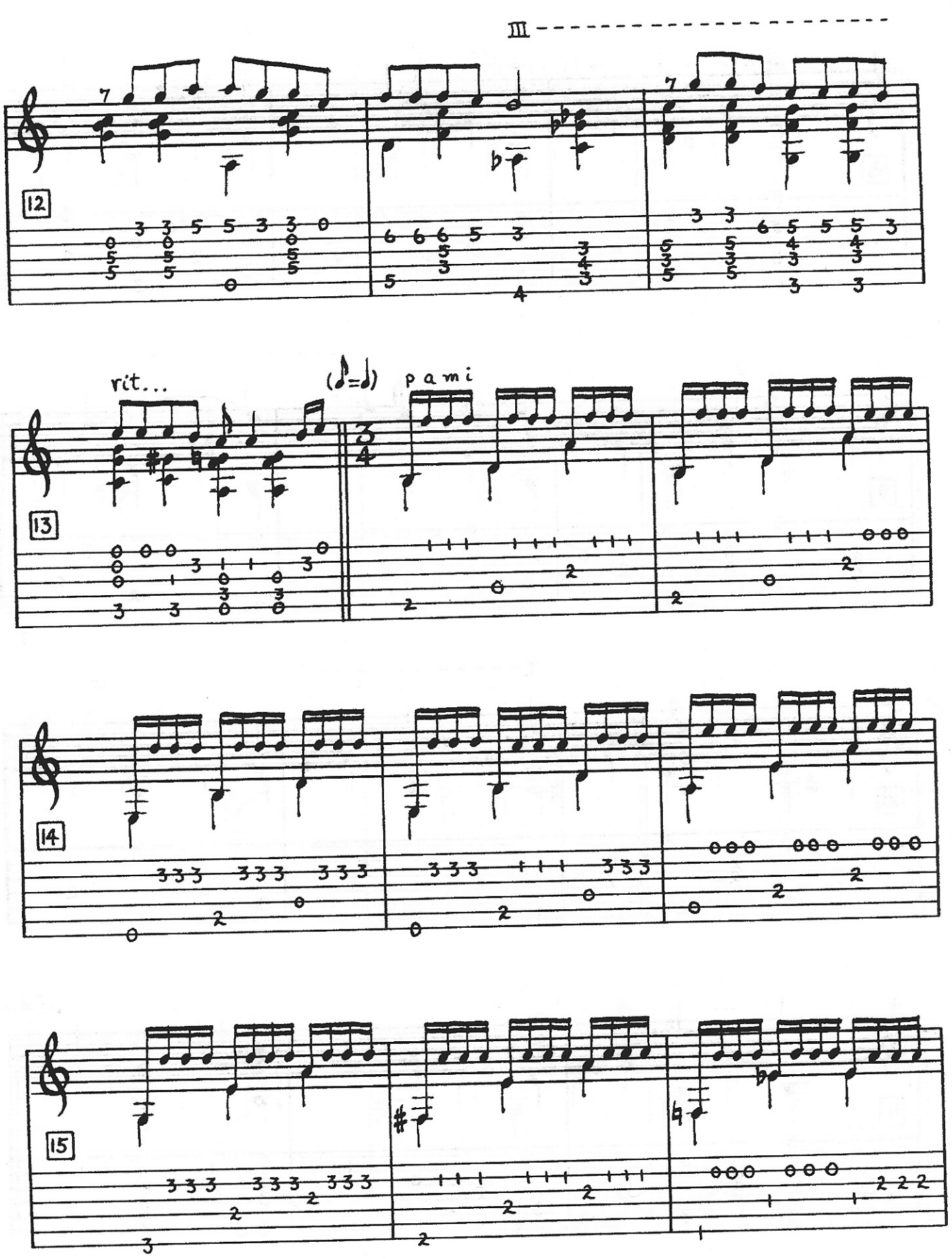
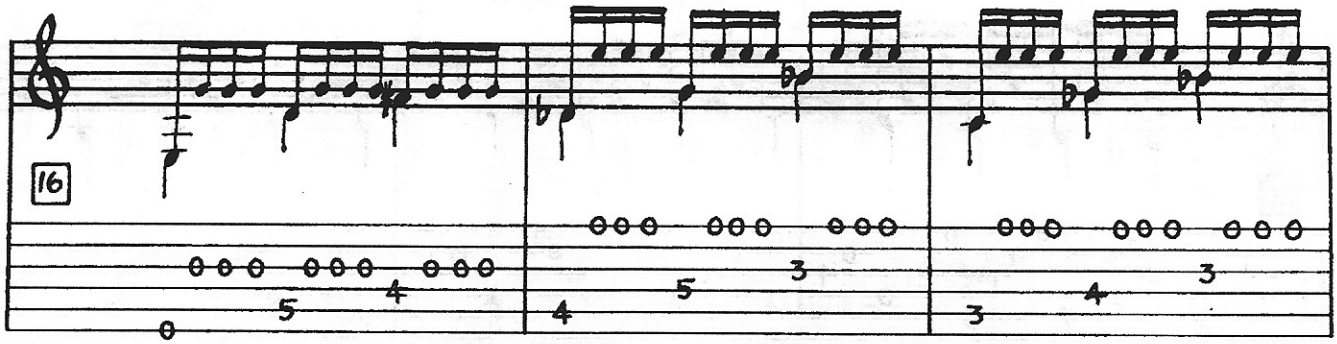

8
9
I- - - - - - - - - - -
rit...
10
(♩=♪)
11


III
12
rit...
(♪=♪)
p a m i
13
14
15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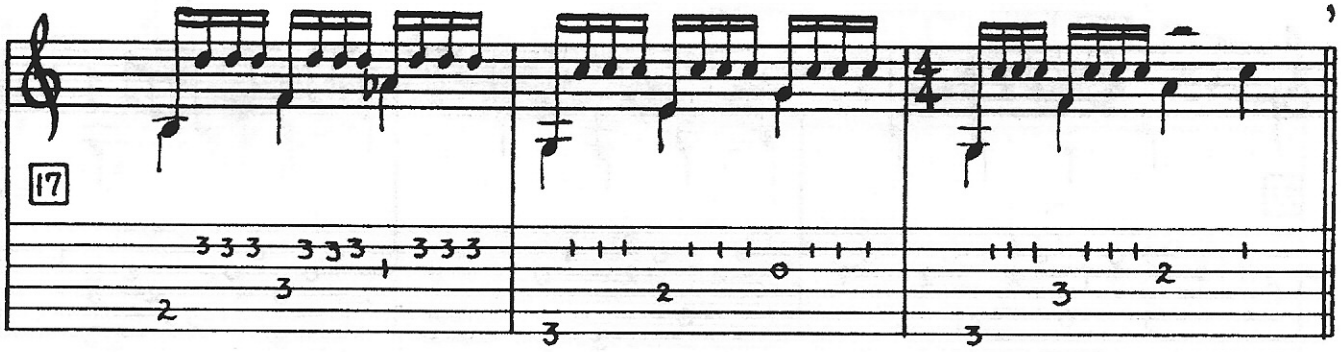
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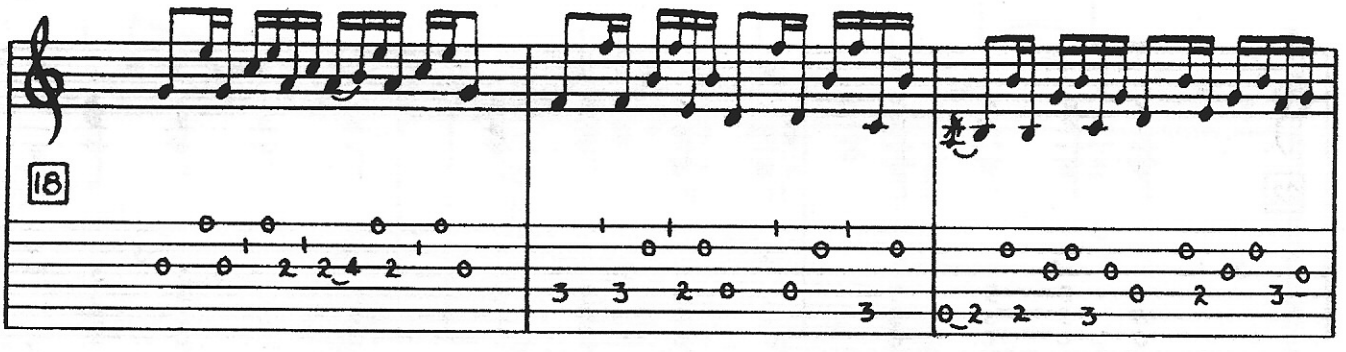
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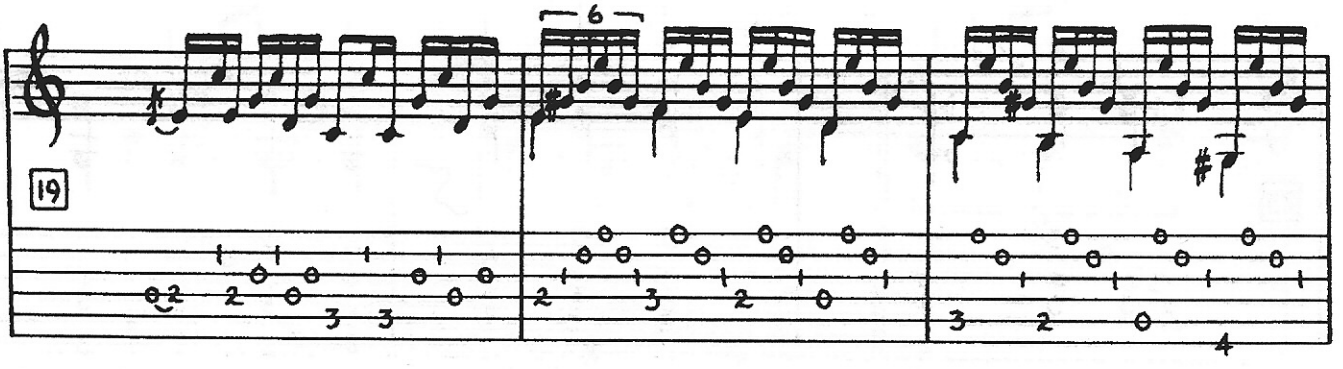
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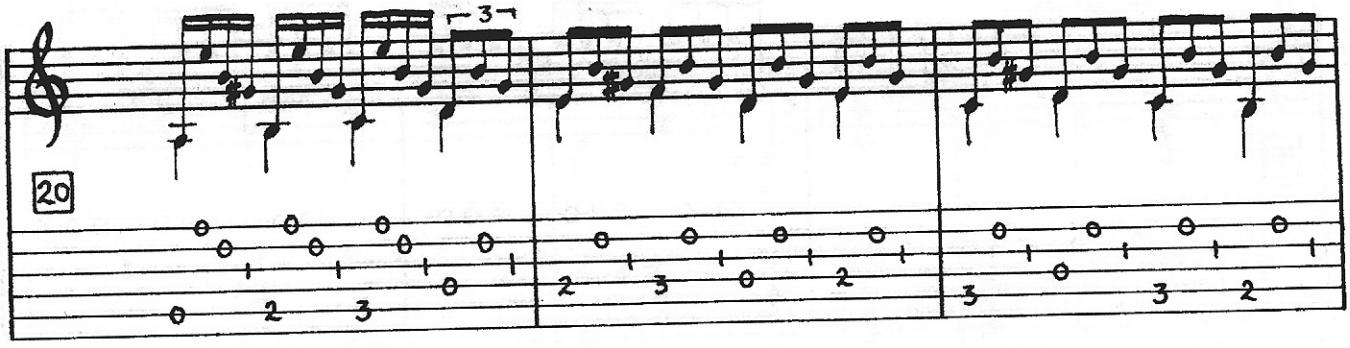
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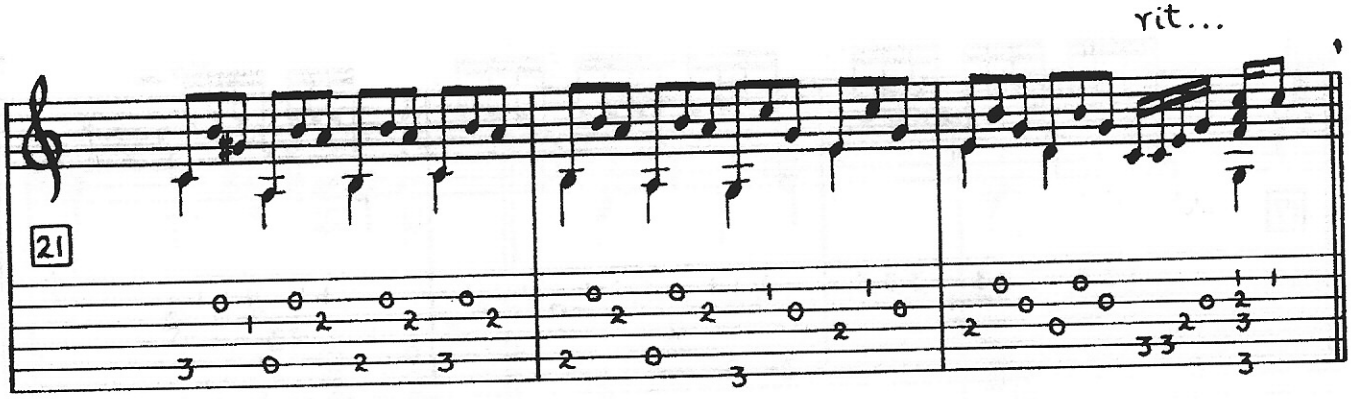
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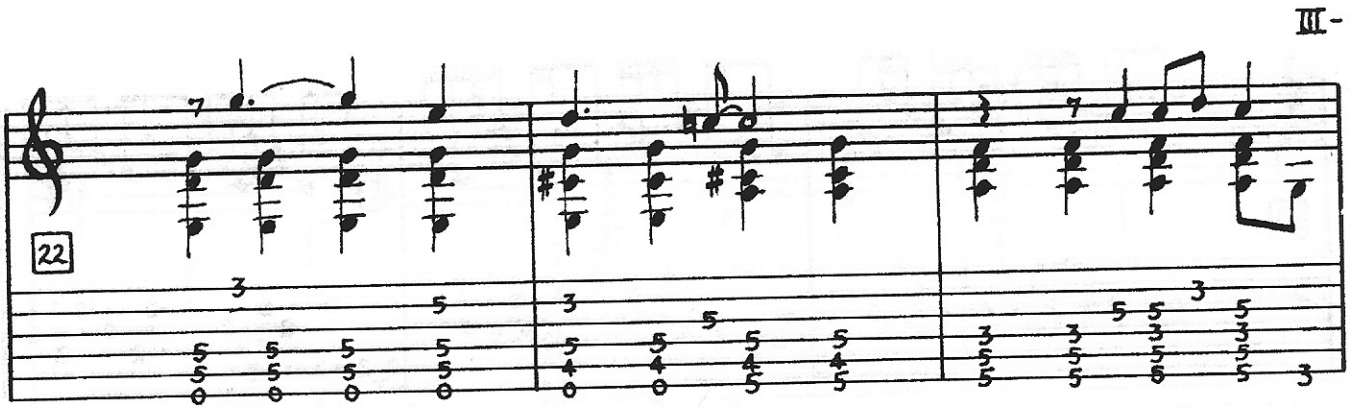
III--
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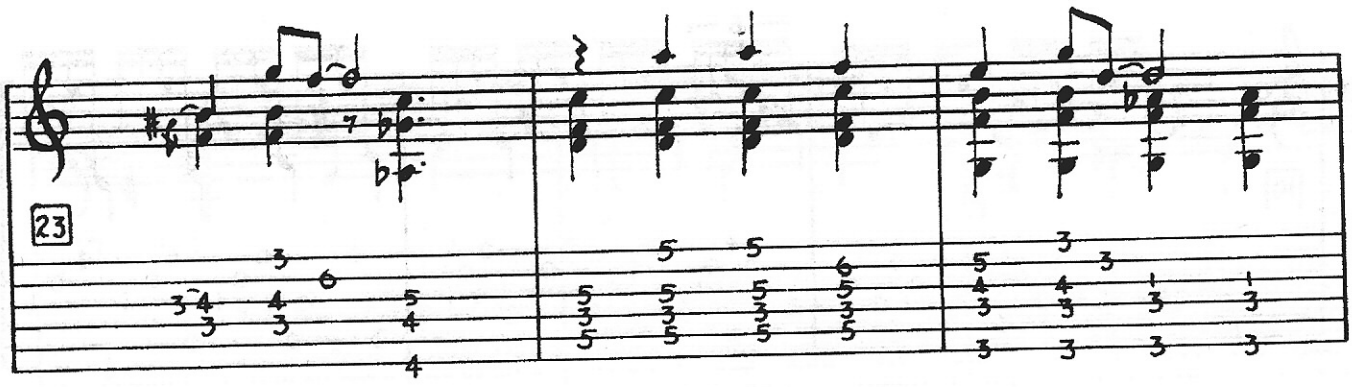
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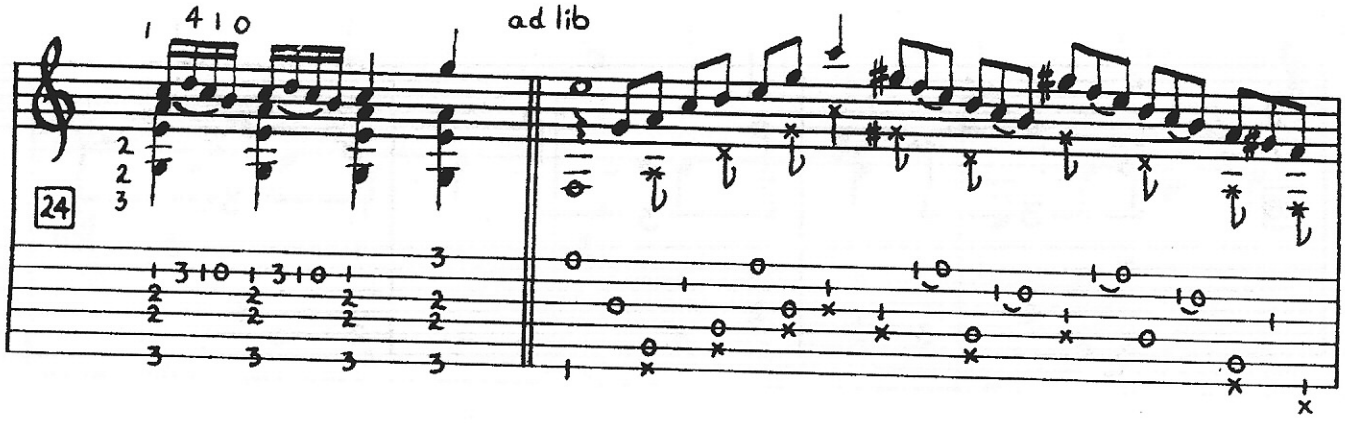
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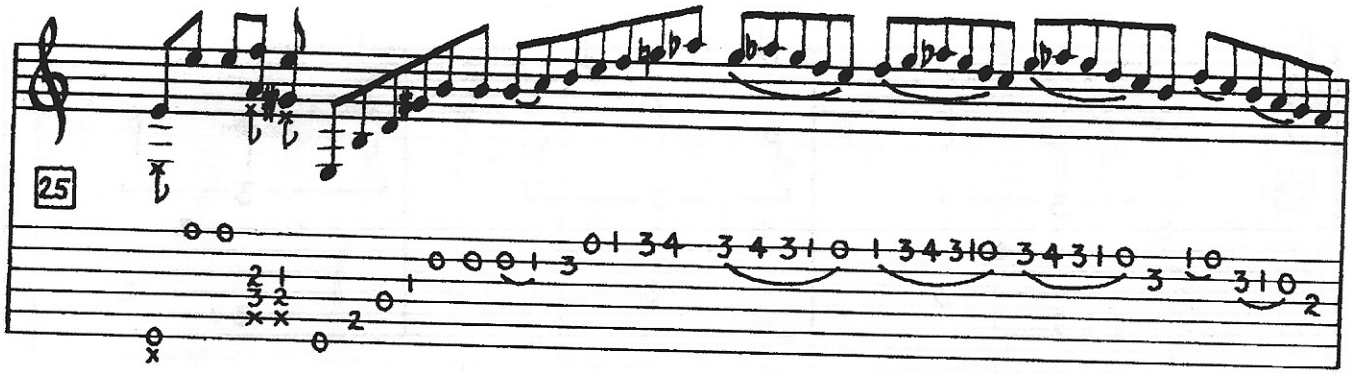
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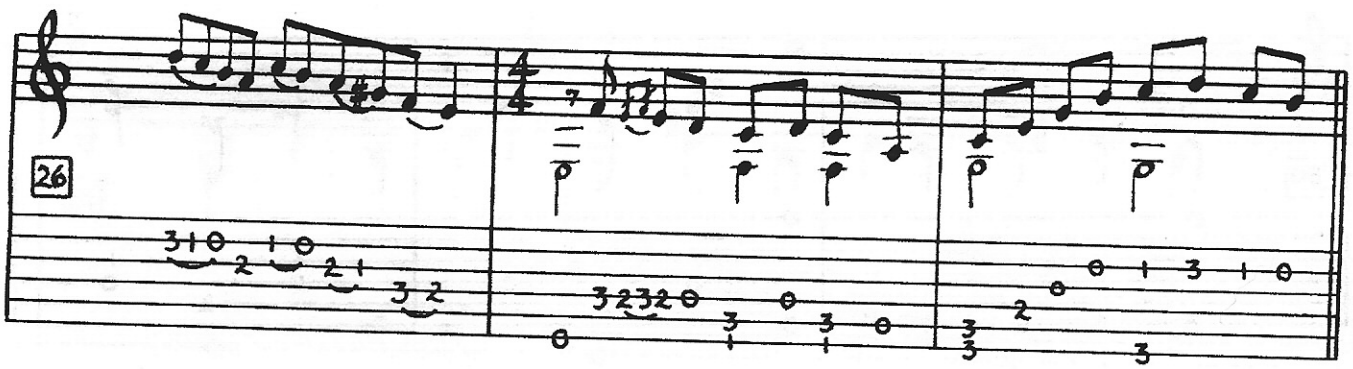
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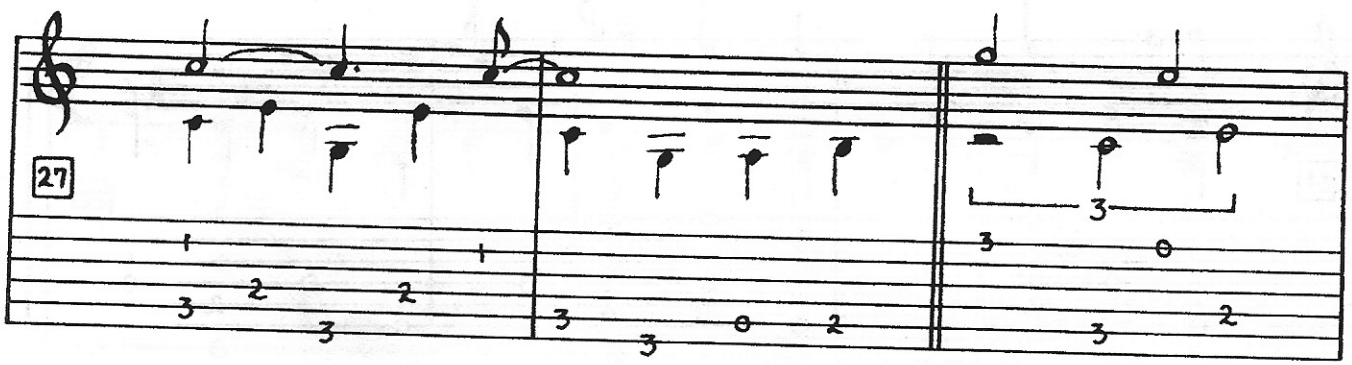
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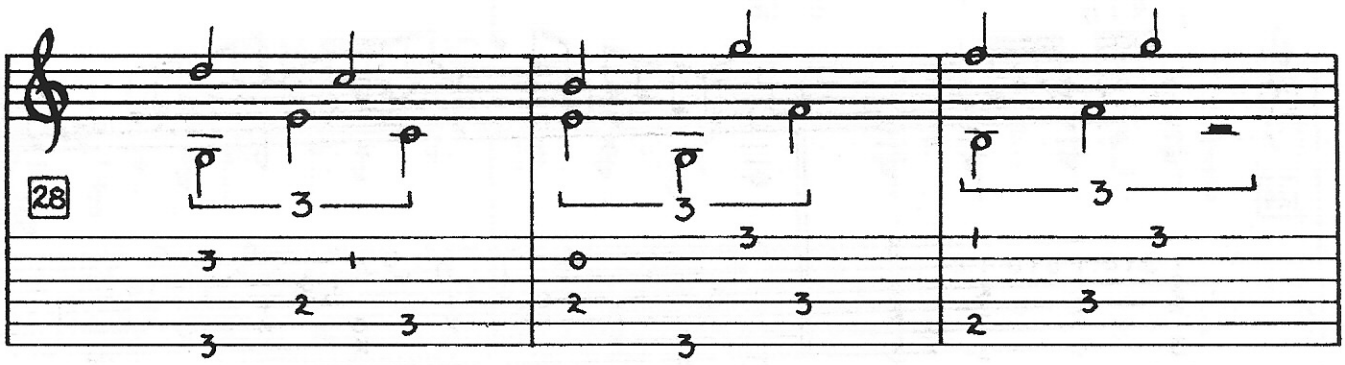
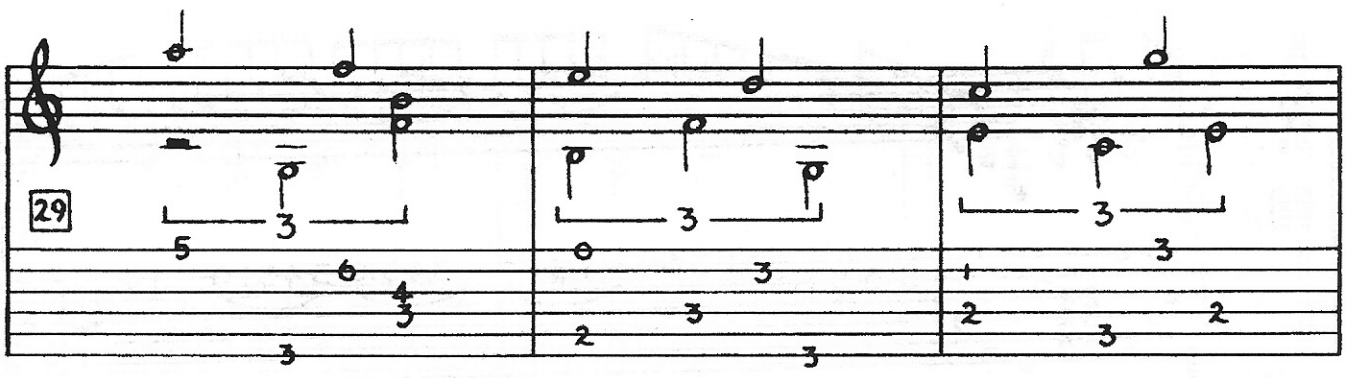
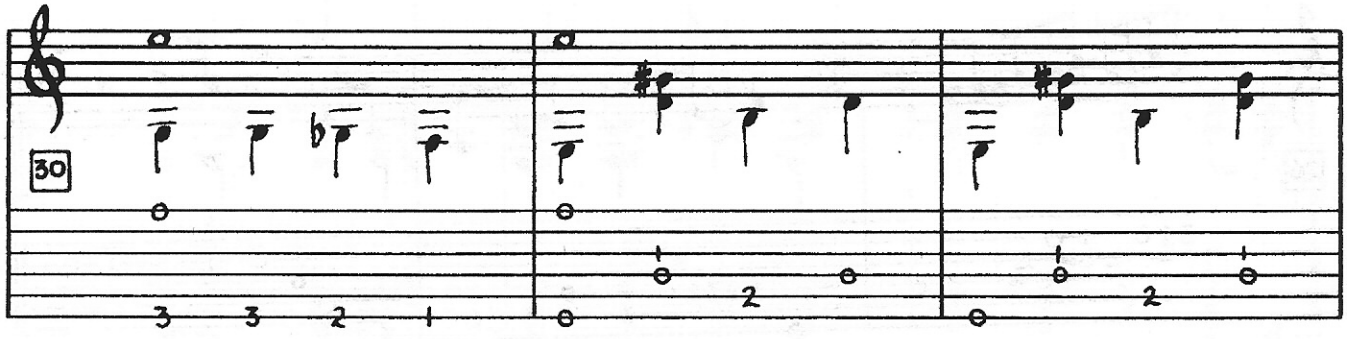
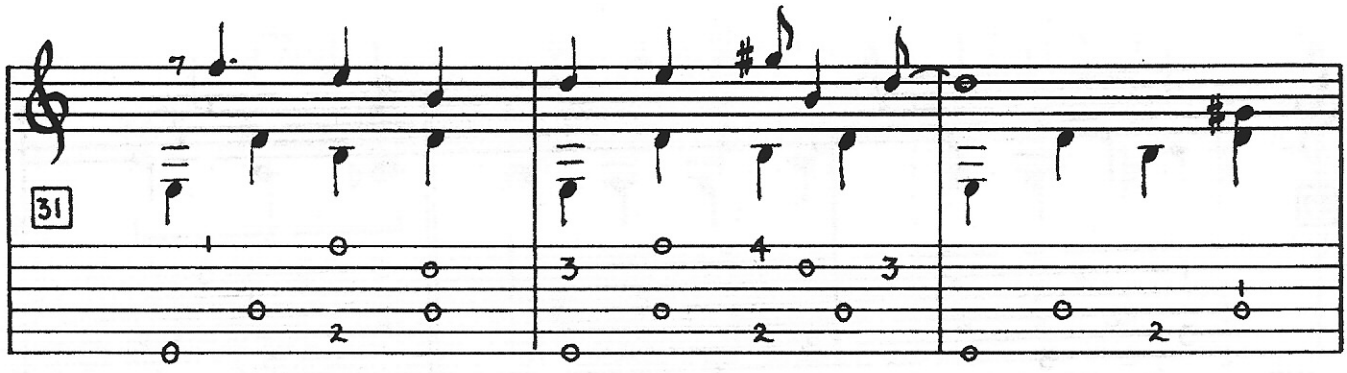
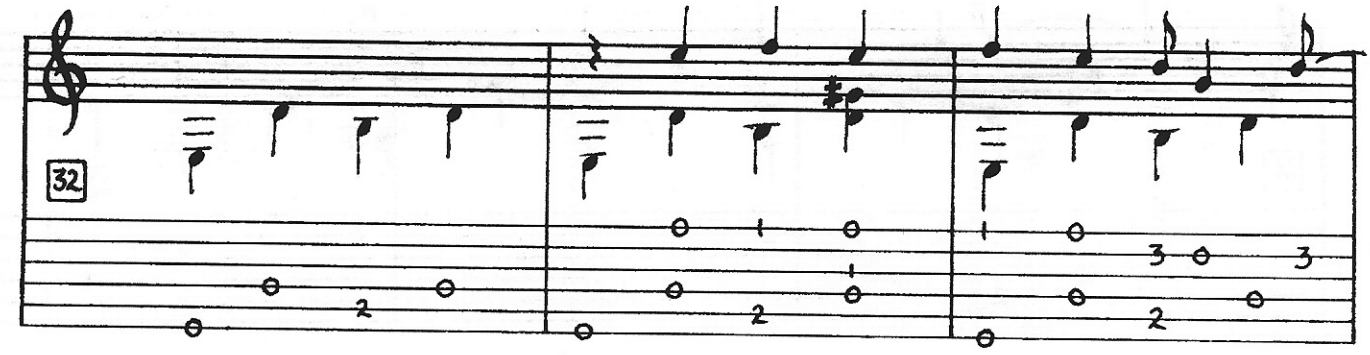


III





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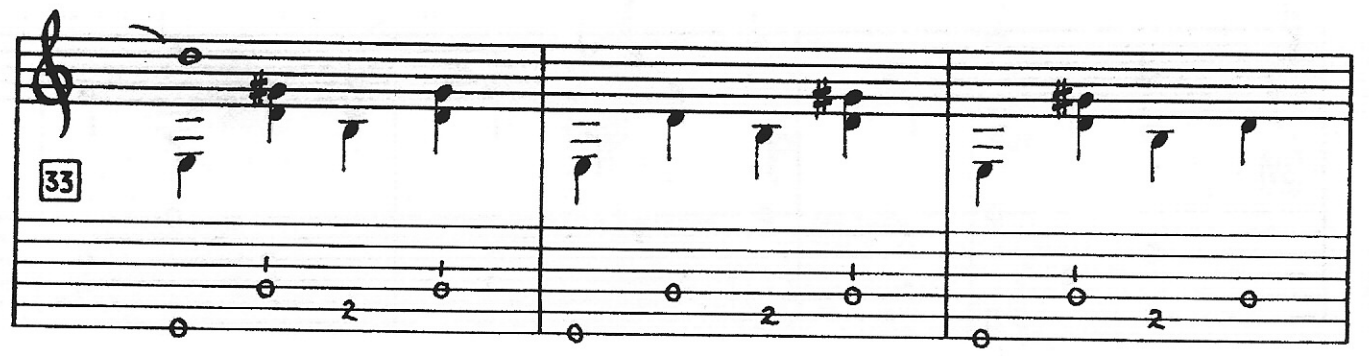
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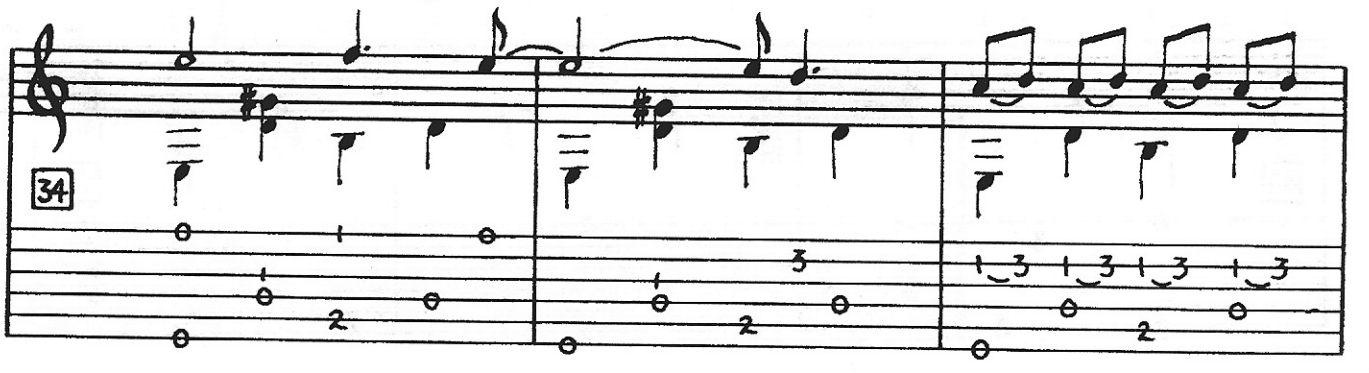
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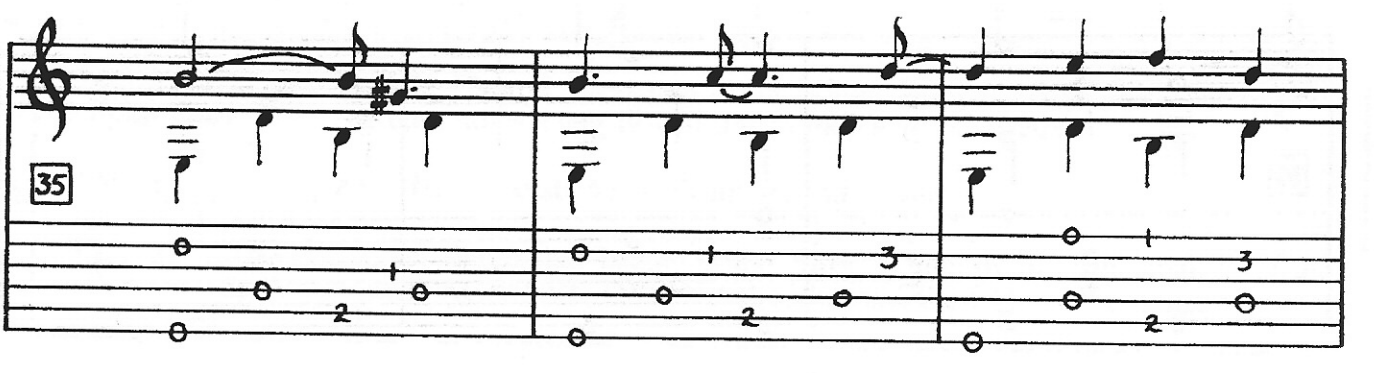
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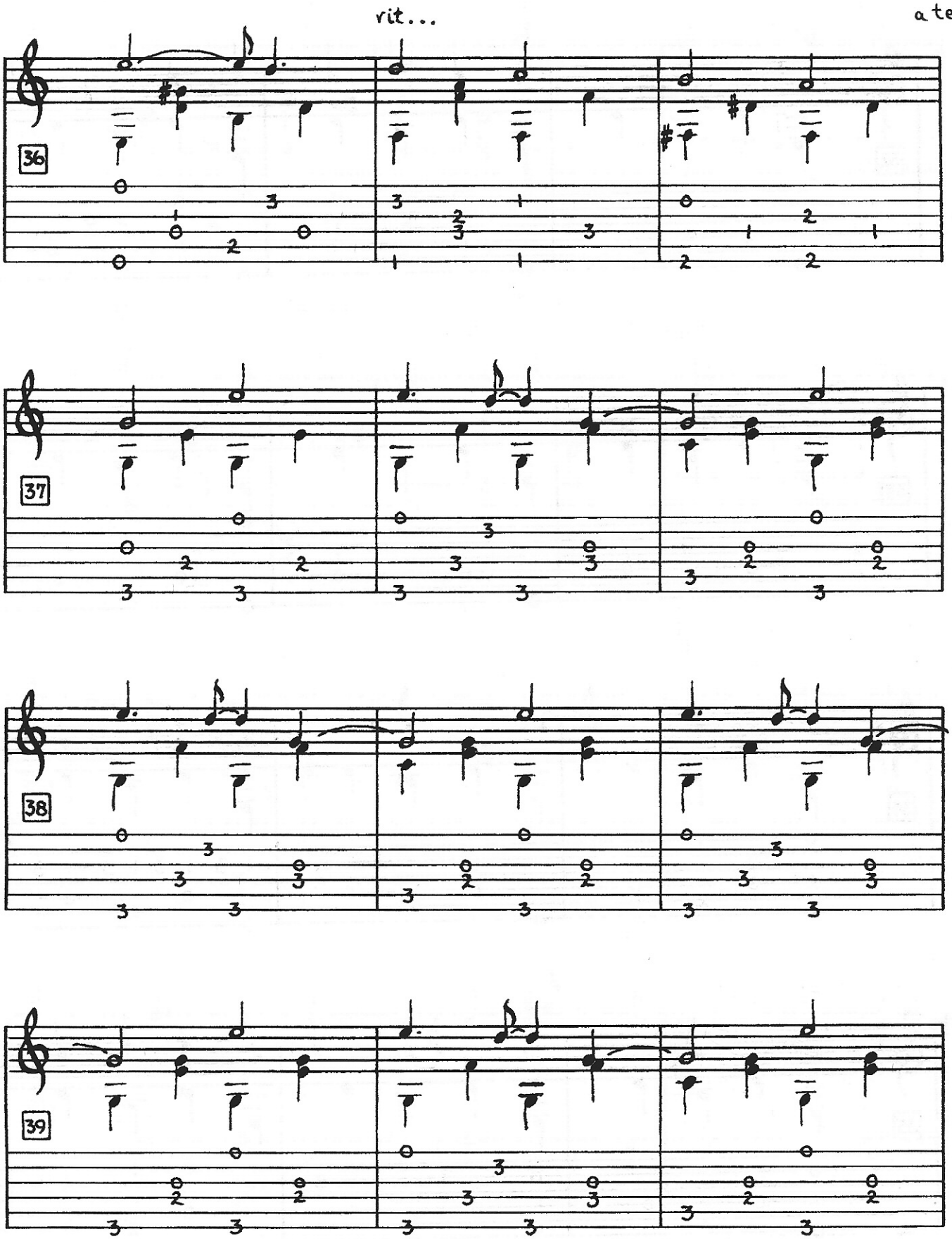
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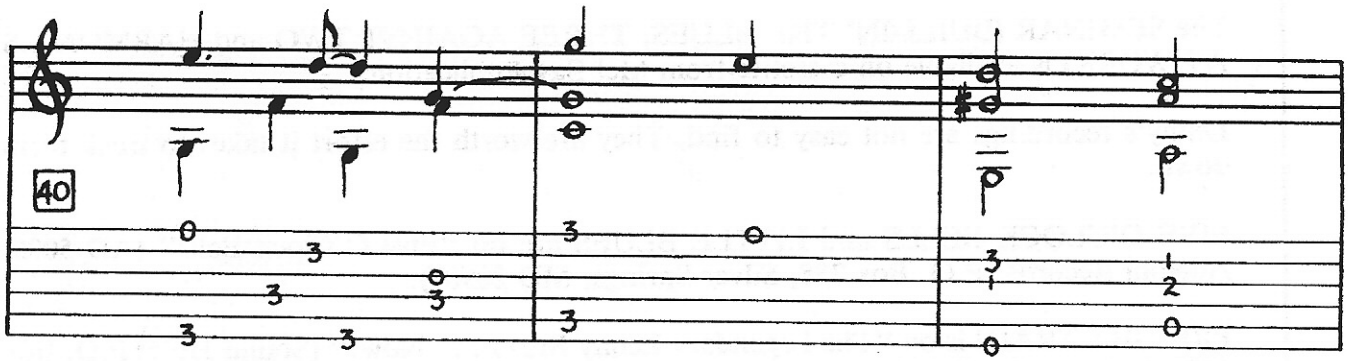

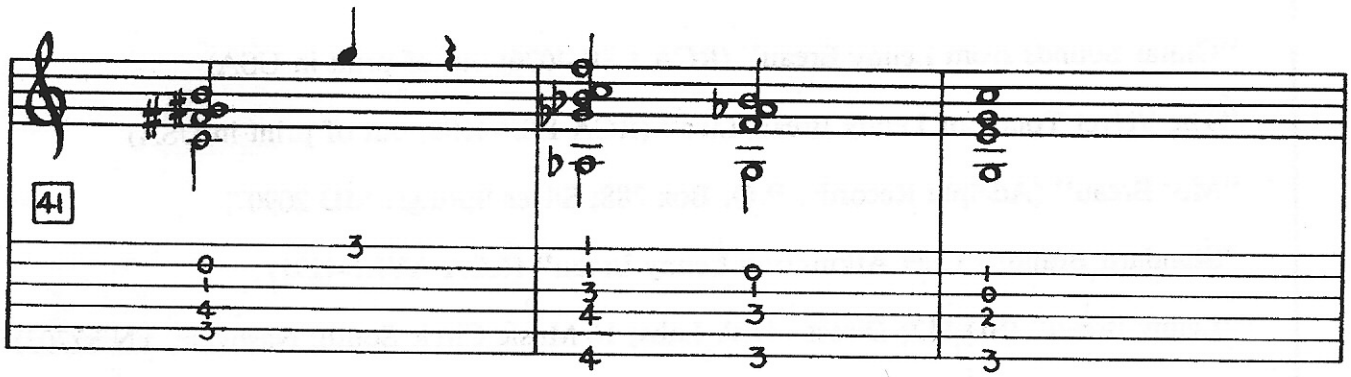

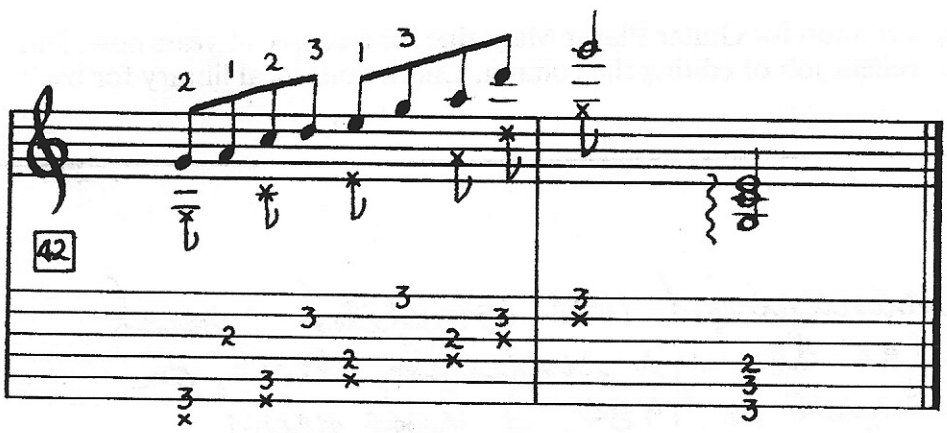

FREIGHT TRAIN

[1] Lenny mutes the 4th, 5th and 6th strings at the bridge, using the edge of his palm. The thumb pick plays the bass notes (stem down) unless indicated otherwise.

[24] In bar one, Lenny frets two strings with his second finger.

[27] The half note triplet figure that begins in bar three, is slightly different than the one demonstrated in THREE AGAINST TWO but the idea and the feel are the same.

DISCOGRAPHY, etc.

The SEMINAR (BUILDIN' THE BLUES, THREE AGAINST TWO and HARMONICS AT WORK) is available on cassettte from Mel Bay Publications.

Lenny's recordings are not easy to find. They are worth the effort it takes to track them down.

FIVE O'CLOCK BELLS and LITTLE BLUES are on "Five O'Clock Bells" (AD 5006; Adelphi Records; P.O. Box 288; Silver Springs, MD 20907).

FREIGHT TRAIN is on "The Legendary Lenny Breau . . . Now!" (Sound Hole; P.O. Box 120355; Nashville, TN 37212; order direct).

You might also look for . . .

"Guitar Sounds from Lenny Breau" (RCA LSP-4076; out of print in USA)

"The Velvet Touch of Lenny Breau-Live" (RCA LSP-4199; out of print in USA)

"Mo' Breau" (Adelphi Records; P.O. Box 288; Silver Springs, MD 20907)

"Standard Brands - Chet Atkins and Lenny Breau" (RCA AYL1-4191)

"Lenny Breau" (SD 112; Direct - Disk Labs; 16 Music Circle South; Nashville, TN 37203)

Lenny has been doing a column for Guitar Player Magazine for a couple of years now. Jim Ferguson has done an excellent job of editing the column. Check your local library for back issues.

This manuscript was completed several weeks before Lenny's untimely death on Sunday August 12, 1984. I have never missed anyone as much as I have missed Lenny in the past few months. I will always remember the times we spent together working on this project and making music.

John Knowles

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Lenny Breau

John Knowles
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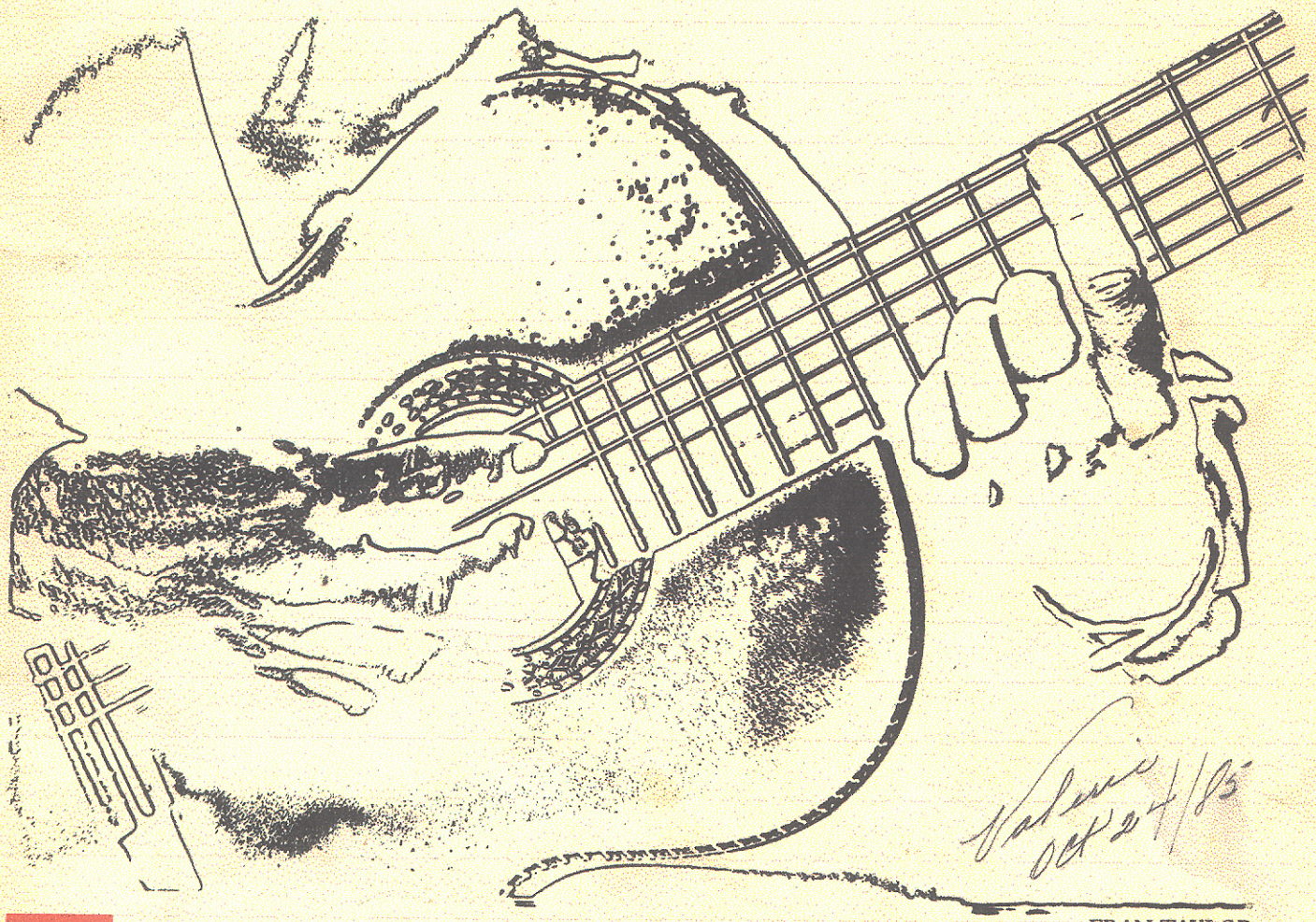

FRAN TAYLOR

MEL